



Edited and with an Introduction by
KATHLEEN COSTELLO-SULLIVAN



Carmilla

**BY JOSEPH
SHERIDAN LE FANU**

A Critical Edition

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BY JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU

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KATHLEEN COSTELLO-SULLIVAN



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For Thomas and Matthew

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Notes on the Text

This edition of *Carmilla* results from a comparison of its oft-neglected first publication in the journal *The Dark Blue*, where it was serialized in four installments—December 1871: 434–48 (chapters 1–3); January 1872: 592–606 (chapters 4–6); February 1872: 701–14 (chapters 7–10); and March 1872: 59–78 (chapters 11–16), under the imprint of S. Low (London)—and its subsequent publication in Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu’s collection *In a Glass Darkly* (3 vols., London: R. Bentley and Son, 1872). It also includes reproductions of the drawings that accompanied *The Dark Blue* journal version of the text.

This edition largely adheres to the earliest, serialized version of the text. The British spellings of words such as *colour* and *sympathise* are maintained. Occasional irregularities in spelling (e.g., “creeks” for “creaks”) and punctuation, such as inconsistent use of hyphens and capitalizing a word in a divided direct quotation, are also reproduced as in the original. The paragraphing of the original text is also maintained. In instances where what is generally considered grammatically unsound today is nonetheless maintained in both versions of the text—for example, using “her’s” for the possessive or failing to use a question mark for a question—I have retained that grammatical construct in this edition. (Such unusual structures are annotated in the footnotes if they are jarringly unusual.) In keeping with the style of the time, extended dialogue by a single character that carries over more than one paragraph does not use a closing quotation mark until the end of the statement, as is done in the first two versions of the text.

Inverted commas have been standardized to contemporary usage for clarity's sake (double quotes for a quotation, one for a quote within a quote). The word *languor*, which is misspelled *langour* three times in earlier chapters of both versions of the text, has been standardized throughout. Use of hyphens for compound words as well as capitalization of words such as *Heaven* are inconsistently employed throughout the serialized text and have been left so in this edition.

Where minor variations occur between the original serialized publication of *Carmilla* and its subsequent publication in *In a Glass Darkly*, such as the addition of paragraph breaks or minor changes in punctuation, I have deferred to the original journal version. In instances where the *In a Glass Darkly* version varies from the original and is inconsistent (e.g., whether to hyphenate the word *lime-tree* or *drawing-room* throughout the text), I have again maintained the form given in the original. Such defaults in favor of the first, serialized version, being generally rare and uniformly minor, are not indicated in footnotes.

I have varied from adherence to the original version of the text and adopted the changes of the later *In a Glass Darkly* version only in the following instances:

- The Prologue, which did not appear in the original publication, is included because it has come to be considered a relevant part of most critical readings of the text.
- In the few instances where the *In a Glass Darkly* version makes grammatically sound or significant revisions, such as adding commas to introductory clauses, removing confusing or unnecessary punctuation, or capitalizing professional titles (such as “General”), these revisions are accepted. Such additions and revisions to the text are indicated in footnotes in the narrative.
- I have omitted the phrase “To be continued” at the end of chapters IV, VI, X, and XVI, which was appended to the conclusion of each serialized portion of the text in *The Dark Blue*.

Last, a word on editorial notations. Definitions, geographical explanations, and clarifications of Le Fanu's contemporary usage of

some words are included in footnotes. Definitions offered are consistent with those found in any standard dictionary. Any translations from Irish or German offered in the text are my own. Geographical explanations are drawn from common-knowledge sources such as maps and encyclopedic descriptions of place. In those few instances where a definition is drawn directly from another source—usually from the *Oxford English Dictionary*—those sources are cited accordingly.

Introduction

Meet *Carmilla*

KATHLEEN COSTELLO-SULLIVAN

First serialized in the journal *The Dark Blue* and published shortly thereafter in the short story collection *In a Glass Darkly*, Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu's 1872 vampire tale is in many ways the overlooked older sister of Bram Stoker's later and more acclaimed work *Dracula*.¹ Despite its acknowledged influence on the later text and its recognition as "the first really successful vampire story," *Carmilla* is sometimes discounted as a minor work (Geary 1999, 19). This is because Le Fanu himself is often dismissed as a comparatively minor writer or pigeon-holed as a representative of the sensational/gothic subgenres, or because Stoker's later text purportedly better exemplifies what one typically seeks in a vampire tale.²

Yet *Carmilla* has nonetheless remained on the critical radar, repeatedly drawing attention and analysis. Of course, the story's very

1. For a reading that situates *Dracula* as a direct response to *Carmilla*, see Signorotti 1996. For another nod to the earlier tale's influence on Stoker, see Miller 2006, esp. 7–8, 13.

2. Benson Saler and Charles A. Ziegler argue that *Dracula* is "more prototypical than *Carmilla* because its narrative features conform fully to the general structure of widely encountered monster-slaying stories whereas that is not the case for *Carmilla*" (2005, 220).

nature as a vampire tale alone generates interest, accounting for its frequent inclusion as an early example of the form in British fiction,³ but *Carmilla* has proven to have far more to offer than merely its vampiric credentials. The story's potential as a political and/or cultural metaphor, its psychological resonances, its representations of gender and sexuality, and its unusual aesthetic and narrative characteristics, to name only a few areas of interest, repeatedly invite literary criticism, forcing scholars to return to this short, complex work again and again. This introduction traces the major movements of that critical history.

It is, of course, as a vampire tale that *Carmilla* originally provoked such pointed interest. Beyond its significance purely as a sensational or entertaining figure in literature, the vampire fed a variety of metaphorical hungers in the wider Victorian literary imagination. According to Robert F. Geary, the increasing popularity of vampires (and of other supernatural creatures and events) from the mid-nineteenth century on can be read as signaling Victorian uncertainty in the face of a more scientific, less religious, and therefore less mysterious world:

The specter of a chilling, purposeless materialism confronted many whose view of humanity and the world no longer was dictated by Christian doctrines. . . . [I]n this climate ghostly supernatural entities were for many no longer embarrassing reminders of dangerous superstitions; instead, the specters and weird events, now thoroughly detached from a Christian context, served as a refuge, if only a clandestine one, from the dominant materialistic scientism. (Geary 1999, 22)

Vampires' supernatural characteristics offered an oasis of mystery in a sea of increasing enlightenment and yet, uncannily, also a corresponding sense of disillusionment. In this respect, the traditional combination of a vampire's simultaneous magnetism and repulsiveness

3. For example, *Carmilla* was included in a New Riverside edition entitled *Three Vampire Tales*, where it was referenced as one of "three classic representations of the vampire" (Williams 2003, back cover).

arguably parallels the mixed feelings experienced by its Victorian contemporaries, who, even while reveling in their accomplishments and scientific breakthroughs, mourned the perceived loss of mystery and wonder that science and materialism were thought to bring. The aggressive foregrounding in *Carmilla* of the sciences—represented, for example, through Laura’s father and references to contemporary figures such as natural scientist Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon—alongside the supernatural certainly suggests an engagement with such tensions in the novel.⁴

A similarly characteristic usage of the vampire by Victorians often investigated in *Carmilla* is the engagement with contemporary new discoveries in psychology and the social sciences. Hung-Jung Lee has argued that “*Carmilla* . . . expresses an increasing fear toward the end of the [nineteenth] century that . . . classifications [differentiating “men from women, ‘civilized’ Europeans from ‘primitive’ natives, moral individuals from corrupt ones”] could easily break down, or turn out to be ineffectual” and that the text thus ultimately frets over “the limits of the self and how desire threatens and transforms those limits” (2006, 23).⁵ William Veeder’s earlier, authoritative reading situates *Carmilla* as “ultimately a tale of repression,” exposing contemporary concern that “orthodox attitudes toward sexual purity had caused a dangerous split between conscious and unconscious” (1980, 198).⁶ Critical readings of *Carmilla* thus often foreground the psychological complexity of the text’s engagement with the unconscious

4. Sally Harris (2003) examines Le Fanu’s engagement with the tension between the spiritual and material worlds in terms of his Irish background. For a reading of *Carmilla* in light of “Victorian disease theories” and “Anglo-Irish ethnicity,” see Willis 2008.

5. For a reading of “Le Fanu’s oeuvre” as “moving the gothic mode away from clanking chains and clichéd ghosts toward a subjectivity of the self” owing to his debt to the works of Emanuel Swedenborg, see Zuber 2006, 75.

6. Michael Davis offers a related reading of *Carmilla* as “a failure of ‘translation’; a traumatising failure to decode the enigmatic signifiers received from and indeed implanted by the other” (2004, 224).

and subjectivity.⁷ *Carmilla* therefore not only reflects contemporary scientific advances in the Victorian era but also stands as both an engagement with and a representation of the concerns hailing from such discoveries.

Given vampires' ability to inspire both curiosity and fear, it is not surprising that they also came to be employed as a metaphor for a host of perceived late Victorian social threats and ills—first among which was concern with female sexuality and power. As Tamar Heller convincingly argues, many of the characteristics attributed to vampires reflect contemporary representations of and insecurities about women and their suspected sexual appetites, as is captured in this novella: “the thematics of appetite in ‘Carmilla’—which [can be linked] to medical discourses about the related female maladies of hysteria, anorexia, and chlorosis—encode this fear of the devouring, sexually voracious woman lurking beneath the docile surface of the devoured woman, her apparent victim” (1996, 79).⁸ As Elizabeth Signorotti argues, whereas Stoker's later text *Dracula* can be said to contain the threat of the contemporary “New Woman,” effectively impaling her on the stake of reinstituted masculine power and medical authority, Le Fanu's text instead empowers women by “depict[ing] a society where men increasingly become relegated to powerless positions while women assume aggressive roles” (1996, 620–24, 607, 611).⁹ *Carmilla* has also been read as representing “a fear of the Other's more vital sexuality overtaking the English colonizers,” which reflects “a conflation of the female and the racial Other” (Brock 2009, 120, 131). Whether read as an endorsement, a rebuttal, or an anxious exploration of female power,

7. For readings of *Carmilla* in terms of Jungian archetypes and Kleinian psychoanalytic theory, see Andriano 1990 and Michelis 2003, respectively.

8. Carol Senf offers another consideration of what vampires and women purportedly have in common, if in a generally less convincing essay (1987, esp. 29).

9. For a related reading of *Carmilla* as employing the tradition of masquerade to produce “subversive representations of female authority and active sexual desire,” see Thomas 1999, 47.

there is little doubt that *Carmilla* presents an unusual and provocative engagement with Victorian domestic and gendered roles.¹⁰

That the crux of Le Fanu's investigation into female power centers around a lesbian interaction obviously also sets *Carmilla* outside the parameters of traditional Victorian representation, reinforcing its interest as a late-nineteenth-century text.¹¹ Although some dismiss the homosexual nature of Laura and Carmilla's attraction in favor of a mother/daughter trope, most scholars recognize the undeniable sexual overtones of their interactions. As such, most would agree with Signorotti that Carmilla "is decidedly no mother," as "[t]he homoerotic overtones of the . . . attack on Laura's breast eclipse the initial mother/child dynamic and establish the nature of the two women's ensuing relationship" (1996, 612).¹² In its reflections of contemporary Victorian concerns and mores as well as its engagement with issues of gender relations and sexuality, *Carmilla* clearly offers a rich and wide array of opportunities for study and interest.

We thus turn now to why this text is so well suited for inclusion in this series on Irish literature. As a Protestant Irish, Dublin-born author, J. Sheridan Le Fanu would have been privy to all the political and cultural concerns of late-nineteenth-century Ireland; his work was also in conversation with the concerns and aesthetics of the wider British literary milieu with which Victorian Ireland was in close

10. Nancy Welter offers a reading of *Carmilla* as reinstating rather than undermining masculine authority (2006, esp. 143–47).

11. For an interesting reading of the role of "transgressive feminine sexuality" as connected to "the language of feminine intellectual discourse," see Major 2007, 151.

12. Examples of readings that emphasize the maternal over the homosexual include Senf 1987, 30; Andriano 1990; and Michelis 2003. For a reading that downplays the homosexual valences in favor of an emphasis on "the limits of the self," see Lee 2006, 23–24. For a different reading of *Carmilla* in terms of "the sexual sacrifice of children" and "the Anglo-Irish child's ambivalent national/cultural identification," see Backus 1999, 6, 127, and in general 127–34. For a reading of *Carmilla* in terms of same-sex desire through the vehicle of naming, see Leal 2007.

conversation, such as the fin de siècle and postindustrial anxieties noted earlier.¹³ Recognition of the contemporary context of Le Fanu's *Carmilla* invariably invites readings that position the text's setting and events as a metaphor for other times and places. Matthew Gibson (2006, 2007), for example, has done excellent research into reading *Carmilla* and its inspirations as connected directly to contemporary eastern European politics and historical figures.¹⁴

Although such political parallels are entirely plausible and even intriguing, there is little doubt that Le Fanu's Irish background also plays an influential role in the crafting of the novella. Scholars have sought to identify the Irish connection in differing ways. In Le Fanu's engagement with the spiritual, Sally Harris sees an effort to "[draw] upon his experiences with Irish folklore and Catholicism to create characters who believe that the spiritual world and material world are intimately connected" (2003, 10). Most convincing, however, are those readings that concentrate on the role of contemporary Irish politics and their impact on Le Fanu's Anglo-Irish sensibilities. As W. J. McCormack has most persuasively and thoroughly argued, "We can see through Le Fanu's life and work a curiously neglected area—Victorian Ireland," exposing the anxieties of the Protestant middle classes at a time of deepening political tensions (1980, 5; see also the discussions on 5–8 and 76–89).

At the publishing of the first installment of *Carmilla* in December 1871, a son of a Protestant clergyman who had already experienced

13. Terence Brown considers the parallels between Irish Protestant and British experiences and worldviews in the late Victorian era (1991, esp. 518). For a recent reading of how *In a Glass Darkly* presents "a symbolical [*sic*] representation of the troubled Victorian spirit," see Gabusi 2008, 1. W. J. McCormack reads *The House by the Church-Yard* as a "Victorian Irish reassessment of the eighteenth century" (1991, 883).

14. On another potential inspiration for the work, see McNally 2001. On "the imagining of Eastern Europe in late-nineteenth century [*sic*] British literature as a projection of anxieties deriving in part from the Irish Question within the Union," see McAteer 2010, 207.

firsthand the consequences of the “tithe war” (Maume 2009) had good reason to feel besieged. William Gladstone had won the 1868 general election on a platform of disestablishing the Church of Ireland; the Home Rule movement had been formed in 1870; and the first Irish Land Act redressing land and tenant rights had passed in August 1871.¹⁵ From an Anglo-Irish perspective, the metaphorical Big House of Anglo-Irish ascendancy had already begun to crumble.¹⁶

Indeed, in an interesting article published in the little-known journal *Cleave*, Jamieson Ridenhour argues that *Carmilla* is “reflective of the political angst then plaguing the Anglo-Irish institution” and that the eponymous character herself serves as a form of *aisling* figure, “the *spierbhean* [*sic*] [who] asks her poet to tell her story so that others will know of her plight” (2002, 57, 61).¹⁷ Each of these readings captures the profound anxieties of Le Fanu’s place and time, which are metaphorically evident in the text.



This edition thus tracks *Carmilla* in all her complexity. It adheres to the earliest publication of the text and thus presents it as it was

15. For this information and an excellent review of the politics and history of this period more generally, see Jackson 1999, esp. chap. 4.

16. I refer to Le Fanu as “Anglo-Irish” here in the sense used by Marjorie Howes: “Le Fanu’s life and family background typify, in many ways, the predicament of the Anglo-Irish in the mid nineteenth [*sic*] century. He was born in 1814 into a middle-class professional (rather than landowning) family” (1992, 165).

17. Although this reading is interesting, there are obstacles to it. In order for *Carmilla* to represent Mother Ireland or the *sean bhean bocht*, she would need to be an inspiring figure generating loyalty, devotion, and purposeful self-sacrifice. Yet Le Fanu’s employing her here as the “poor old woman” of Irish mythology would need to be read as pointedly ironic: instead of productive sacrifice, General Spielsdorf sets himself up for needless suffering at the hands of a beautiful, rich, and unexpectedly young mother. For *Carmilla* to represent Ireland, she similarly would need to inspire devotion and portray defiant victimhood, as in the *aisling* tradition, but *Carmilla* is no one’s victim and more likely serves as a “return of the repressed” because, heir to the Karnstein lands, she returns to drive the English (read: Anglo-Irish) Other from her rightful place.

originally encountered rather than as one story among others, as it is in the collection *In a Glass Darkly*—an approach that unearths interesting, original choices later overwritten in subsequent editions, such as the original usage of the term *odylic*, not *idyllic*, in the text's first run (see chapter II on this particular revision and “Notes on the Text” for more on editorial choices). Each of the four critical essays collected here, offered by both emerging and well-known scholars in their fields, represents a new yet accessible reading of this important short work while engaging with different facets of the dominant literary critical trends concerning *Carmilla*. Each essay frames prior discussions of extant debates and opens the door to new interpretive directions for students and advanced scholars alike.

The first two articles in this collection, taken in tandem, engage the questions of Carmilla's sexuality and Irishness, and they model how scholars can use the same material to produce differing conclusions on a text. Irish gothic expert Jarlath Killeen's article “An Irish Carmilla?” engages directly with the much scrutinized question of the novella's (Anglo-)Irish contexts and credentials. Noting that “Ireland is never mentioned” in Le Fanu's text, Killeen takes its sexual resonances as a given and instead focuses on the historical and biographical contexts that invite Anglo-Irish readings of *Carmilla*. He explores how *Carmilla* captures dominant metaphorical resonances of its day, as in its employ of vocabulary customarily applied to Irish Famine victims. He argues, however, that readings of the text's Anglo-Irishness are complicated by the indistinct cultural placement of the Anglo-Irish as well as by the inherent ambiguity of the gothic genre, and he provocatively proposes that the text employs images “suggestive of dispossessed Gaelic aristocrats.” Killeen thus presents compelling reasons to read Carmilla as Irish, but he recognizes the indeterminacy of that identification and the possibility that such a classification, like Anglo-Irishness itself, remains ambivalent.

Renee Fox's reading, too, examines the role of Irish identity in *Carmilla* and recognizes the difficulty in forging “a textual distinction between two class factions (Anglo-Irish and Catholic)” in the novella. Whereas Killeen considers the lesbian element of the text to

be accepted in most readings and identifies the Irish reading as potentially ambiguous, Fox suggests that the role of female sexuality in the novella is impossible to separate from its political contexts and, indeed, that the very reading of lesbianism is itself subject to scrutiny because “Carmilla’s . . . interest in women does not definitively mark her as perverse, unnatural, or different” in a nineteenth-century context. Instead, Fox argues that the two women’s intimacy signals a productive “indistinguishability between races or classes” in Le Fanu’s text, thereby creating “a space” where the embattled Anglo-Irish might establish narrative and cultural survival.

If *Carmilla* draws on its Irish contexts as well as on its socio-historical ones, contributor Lisabeth Buchelt counters the traditional critical privileging of the gothic in readings of *Carmilla* by exploring the resonance and usage of the visual and literary “aesthetics of . . . medievalism” in the novella. Drawing on Edmund Burke’s differentiation of the beautiful and the sublime and on William Gilpin’s addition of the picturesque, Buchelt highlights the novella’s engagement with such aesthetic categories in its representation of the eponymous vampire. By examining narrative instances where the exterior, picturesque landscape intrudes upon the façade of Carmilla’s exterior beauty, Buchelt convincingly argues that the medieval picturesque exposes the lurking monstrosity underneath Carmilla’s attractive exterior. In this respect, she importantly complicates the standard gothic reading of the novel, asserting that “Le Fanu . . . arguably spends more time employing the visual aesthetics of the sublime, beautiful, and picturesque than he does what might be thought of as more classical markers of the literary gothic.”

The last contribution to this collection, by Victorian and film scholar Nancy M. West, considers the ways that *Carmilla*, like its namesake vampire, shifts form in various film adaptations. Surveying the history of these adaptations, West provides a helpful illustration of what it means to “adapt” a text. In a new and compelling reading, she also exposes filmmakers’ unusual willingness to take liberties with the original, concluding that *Carmilla* provides “a wonderfully unfettered model for translating page to screen.”

More than “just” a vampire tale, this compelling novella has the capacity to extend its hypnotic sway not only across various areas of interest—gender, sexuality, politics, and culture—but also across sub-genres, styles, and media: gothic, medieval aesthetic, literary, filmic. I trust that this edition and the contributed articles will touch their readers with the same irresistible draw and enthusiasm that has led generations to follow Le Fanu’s provocative tale in years past and undoubtedly, like its namesake revenant, for years to come.

PART ONE



Carmilla

JOSEPH SHERIDAN LE FANU

Prologue

Upon a paper attached to the Narrative which follows, Doctor Hesselius has written a rather elaborate note, which he accompanies with a reference to his Essay on the strange subject which the MS. illuminates.

This mysterious subject, he treats, in that Essay, with his usual learning and acumen, and with remarkable directness and condensation. It will form but one volume of the series of that extraordinary man's collected papers.

As I publish the case, in these volumes, simply to interest the "laity," I shall forestall the intelligent lady, who relates it, in nothing; and, after due consideration, I have determined, therefore, to abstain from presenting any *précis* of the learned Doctor's reasoning, or extract from his statement on a subject which he describes as "involving, not improbably, some of the profoundest arcane of our dual existence, and its intermediates."

I was anxious, on discovering this paper, to re-open the correspondence commenced by Doctor Hesselius, so many years before, with a person so clever and careful as his informant seems to have been. Much to my regret, however, I found that she had died in the interval.

She, probably, could have added little to the Narrative which she communicates in the following pages, with, so far as I can pronounce, such a conscientious particularity.

I

An Early Fright

In Styria,¹ we, though by no means magnificent people, inhabit a castle, or schloss.² A small income, in that part of the world, goes a great way. Eight or nine hundred a year does wonders. Scantily enough ours would have answered among wealthy people at home. My father is English, and I bear an English name, although I never saw England. But here, in this lonely and primitive place, where everything is so marvellously cheap, I really don't see how ever so much more money would at all materially add to our comforts, or even luxuries.

My father was in the Austrian service, and retired upon a pension and his patrimony, and purchased this feudal residence, and the small estate on which it stands, a bargain.

Nothing can be more picturesque or solitary. It stands on a slight eminence in a forest. The road, very old and narrow, passes in front of its drawbridge, never raised in my time, and its moat, stocked with perch, and sailed over by many swans, and floating on its surface white fleets of water-lilies.

1. This location invites reference to the portion of the former Duchy of Styria that is currently located in Slovenia and hearkens to the central placement of vampires in the eastern European tradition. However, the German-language references to Styria and to the more specific "Upper Styria" privilege the German-speaking area that today comprises part of Austria. For an interesting reading of the potential meanings of this location, see Gibson 2006 and 2007.

2. German word for "castle."

Over all this the schloss shows its many-windowed front; its towers, and its Gothic chapel.³

The forest opens in an irregular and very picturesque glade before its gate, and at the right a steep Gothic bridge carries the road over a stream that winds in deep shadow through the wood.

I have said that this is a very lonely place. Judge whether I say truth. Looking from the hall door towards the road, the forest in which our castle stands extends fifteen miles to the right, and twelve to the left. The nearest inhabited village is about seven of your English miles to the left. The nearest inhabited schloss of any historic associations, is that of old General Spielsdorf, nearly twenty miles away to the right.

I have said “the nearest *inhabited* village,” because there is, only three miles westward, that is to say in the direction of General Spielsdorf’s schloss, a ruined village, with its quaint little church, now roofless, in the aisle of which are the mouldering tombs of the proud family of Karnstein, now extinct, who once owned the equally desolate chateau which, in the thick of the forest, overlooks the silent ruins of the town.

Respecting the cause of the desertion of this striking and melancholy spot, there is a legend which I shall relate to you another time.

I must tell you now, how very small is the party who constitute the inhabitants of our castle. I don’t include servants, or those dependents who occupy rooms in the buildings attached to the schloss. Listen, and wonder! My father, who is the kindest man on earth, but growing old; and I, at the date of my story, only nineteen. Eight years have passed since then. I and my father constituted the family at the schloss. My mother, a Styrian lady, died in my infancy, but I had a good-natured governess, who had been with me from, I might almost say, my infancy. I could not remember the time when her fat, benignant face was not a familiar picture in my memory. This was Madame

3. Adhering to a medieval architectural style known for its pointed arches and emphasis on height.

Perrodon, a native of Berne,⁴ whose care and good nature in part supplied to me the loss of my mother, whom I do not even remember, so early I lost her. She made a third at our little dinner party. There was a fourth, Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, a lady such as you term, I believe, a “finishing governess.” She spoke French and German, Madame Perrodon French and broken English, to which my father and I added English, which, partly to prevent its becoming a lost language among us, and partly from patriotic motives, we spoke every day. The consequence was a Babel,⁵ at which strangers used to laugh, and which I shall make no attempt to reproduce in this narrative. And there were two or three young lady friends besides, pretty nearly of my own age, who were occasional visitors, for longer or shorter terms; and these visits I sometimes returned.

These were our regular social resources; but of course there were chance visits from “neighbours” of only five or six leagues distance. My life was, notwithstanding,⁶ rather a solitary one, I can assure you.

My *gouvernantes*⁷ had just so much control over me as you might conjecture such sage persons would have in the case of a rather spoiled girl, whose only parent allowed her pretty nearly her own way in everything.

The first occurrence in my existence, which produced a terrible impression upon my mind, which, in fact, never has been effaced, was one of the very earliest incidents of my life which I can recollect. Some people will think it so trifling that it should not be recorded here. You will see, however, by-and-bye, why I mention it. The nursery, as it was called, though I had it all to myself, was a large room in the upper story of the castle, with a steep oak roof. I can’t have been more than six years old, when one night I awoke, and looking round the room

4. A city in Switzerland with both French- and German-language associations.

5. Reference to the Tower of Babel in the Bible, where God creates multiple languages (there had previously been only one) and thereby “confused the language of the whole earth.” See Genesis 11:1–9.

6. These commas were added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

7. French word for “governesses.”

from my bed, failed to see the nursery-maid. Neither was my nurse there; and I thought myself alone. I was not frightened, for I was one of those happy children who are studiously kept in ignorance of ghost stories, of fairy tales, and of all such lore as makes us cover up our heads when the door creaks⁸ suddenly, or the flicker of an expiring candle makes the shadow of a bed-post dance upon the wall, nearer to our faces. I was vexed and insulted at finding myself, as I conceived, neglected, and I began to whimper, preparatory to a hearty bout of roaring; when to my surprise, I saw a solemn, but very pretty face looking at me from the side of the bed. It was that of a young lady who was kneeling, with her hands under the coverlet. I looked at her with a kind of pleased wonder, and ceased whimpering. She caressed me with her hands, and lay down beside me on the bed, and drew me towards her, smiling;⁹ I felt immediately delightfully soothed, and fell asleep again. I was wakened by a sensation as if two needles ran into my breast very deep at the same moment, and I cried loudly. The lady started back, with her eyes fixed on me, and then slipped down upon the floor, and, as I thought, hid herself under the bed.

I was now for the first time frightened, and I yelled with all my might and main. Nurse, nursery-maid, housekeeper, all came running in, and hearing my story, they made light of it, soothing me all they could meanwhile. But, child as I was, I could perceive that their faces were pale with an unwonted look of anxiety, and I saw them look under the bed, and about the room, and peep under tables and pluck open cupboards; and the housekeeper whispered to the nurse: "Lay your hand along that hollow in the bed; someone *did* lie there, so sure as you did not; the place is still warm."

I remember the nursery-maid petting me, and all three examining my chest, where I told them I felt the puncture, and pronouncing that there was no sign visible that any such thing had happened to me.

8. A misspelling for "creaks," employed in both the serialized text and *In a Glass Darkly*.

9. Changed from a comma to a semicolon in *In a Glass Darkly*.

The housekeeper and the two other servants who were in charge of the nursery, remained sitting up all night; and from that time a servant always sat up in the nursery until I was about fourteen.

I was very nervous for a long time after this. A doctor was called in, he was pallid and elderly. How well I remember his long saturnine face, slightly pitted with small pox, and his chestnut wig. For a good while, every second day, he came and gave me medicine, which of course I hated.

The morning after I saw this apparition I was in a state of terror, and could not bear to be left alone, daylight though it was, for a moment.

I remember my father coming up and standing at the bedside, and talking cheerfully, and asking the nurse a number of questions, and laughing very heartily at one of the answers; and patting me on the shoulder, and kissing me, and telling me not to be frightened, that it was nothing but a dream and could not hurt me.

But I was not comforted, for I knew the visit of the strange woman was *not* a dream; and I was *awfully* frightened.

I was a little consoled by the nursery-maid's assuring me that it was she who had come and looked at me, and lain down beside me in the bed, and that I must have been half-dreaming not to have known her face. But this, though supported by the nurse, did not quite satisfy me.

I remember, in the course of that day, a venerable old man, in a black cassock, coming into the room with the nurse and housekeeper, and talking a little to them, and very kindly to me; his face was very sweet and gentle, and he told me they were going to pray, and joined my hands together, and desired me to say, softly, while they were praying, "Lord hear all good prayers for us, for Jesus' sake." I think these were the very words, for I often repeated them to myself, and my nurse used for years to make me say them in my prayers.

I remember so well the thoughtful sweet face of that white-haired old man, in his black cassock, as he stood in that rude, lofty, brown room, with the clumsy furniture of a fashion three hundred years old, about him, and the scanty light entering its shadowy atmosphere

through the small lattice. He kneeled, and the three women with him, and he prayed aloud with an earnest quavering voice for, what appeared to me, a long time.

I forget all my life preceding that event, and for some time after it is all obscure also, but the scenes I have just described stand out vivid as the isolated pictures of the phantasmagoria surrounded by darkness.

II

A Guest

I am now going to tell you something so strange that it will require all your faith in my veracity to believe my story. It is not only true, nevertheless, but truth of which I have been an eye-witness.

It was a sweet summer evening, and my father asked me, as he sometimes did, to take a little ramble with him along that beautiful forest vista which I have mentioned as lying in front of the schloss.

“General Spielsdorf cannot come to us so soon as I had hoped,” said my father, as we pursued our walk.

He was to have paid us a visit of some weeks, and we had expected his arrival next day. He was to have brought with him a young lady, his niece and ward, Mademoiselle Rheinfeldt, whom I had never seen, but whom I had heard described as a very charming girl, and in whose society I had promised myself many happy days. I was more disappointed than a young lady living in a town, or a bustling neighbourhood can possibly imagine. This visit, and the new acquaintance it promised, had furnished my day dream for many weeks.

“And how soon does he come?” I asked.

“Not till autumn. Not for two months, I dare say,” he answered. “And I am very glad now, dear, that you never knew Mademoiselle Rheinfeldt.”

“And why?” I asked, both mortified and curious.

“Because the poor young lady is dead,” he replied. “I quite forgot I had not told you, but you were not in the room when I received the General’s¹ letter this evening.”

I was very much shocked. General Spielsdorf had mentioned in his first letter, six or seven weeks before, that she was not so well as he would wish her, but there was nothing to suggest the remotest suspicion of danger.

“Here is the General’s letter,” he said, handing it to me. “I am afraid he is in great affliction; the letter appears to me to have been written very nearly in distraction.”

We sat down on a rude bench, under a group of magnificent lime-trees. The sun was setting with all its melancholy splendour behind the sylvan horizon, and the stream that flows beside our home, and passes under the steep old bridge I have mentioned, wound through many a group of noble trees, almost at our feet, reflecting in its current the fading crimson of the sky. General Spielsdorf’s letter was so extraordinary, so vehement, and in some places so self-contradictory, that I read it twice over—the second time aloud to my father—and was still unable to account for it, except by supposing that grief had unsettled his mind.

It said “I have lost my darling daughter—for as such I loved her. During the last days of dear Bertha’s illness I was not able to write to you. Before then I had no idea of her danger. I have lost her, and now learn *all*, too late. She died in the peace of innocence, and in the glorious hope of a blessed futurity. The fiend who betrayed our infatuated hospitality has done it all. I thought I was receiving into my house innocence, gaiety, a charming companion for my lost Bertha. Heavens! what a fool have I been! I thank God my child died without a suspicion of the cause of her sufferings. She is gone without so much as conjecturing the nature of her illness, and the accursed passion of the agent of all this misery. I devote my remaining days to tracking and extinguishing a monster. I am told I may hope to accomplish my

1. Capitalized in *In a Glass Darkly*; change maintained throughout this edition.

righteous and merciful purpose. At present there is scarcely a gleam of light to guide me. I curse my conceited incredulity, my despicable affectation of superiority, my blindness, my obstinacy—all—too late. I cannot write or talk collectedly now. I am distracted. So soon as I shall have a little recovered, I mean to devote myself for a time to enquiry, which may possibly lead me as far as Vienna. Some time in the autumn, two months hence, or earlier if I live, I will see you—that is, if you permit me; I will then tell you all that I scarce dare put upon paper now. Farewell. Pray for me, dear friend.”

In these terms ended this strange letter. Though I had never seen Bertha Rheinfeldt my eyes filled with tears at the sudden intelligence; I was startled, as well as profoundly disappointed.

The sun had now set, and it was twilight by the time I had returned the General’s letter to my father.

It was a soft² clear evening, and we loitered, speculating upon the possible meanings of the violent and incoherent sentences which I had just been reading. We had nearly a mile to walk before reaching the road that passes the schloss in front, and by that time the moon was shining brilliantly. At the drawbridge we met Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, who had come out, without their bonnets, to enjoy the exquisite moonlight.

We heard their voices gabbling in animated dialogue as we approached. We joined them at the drawbridge, and turned about to admire with them the beautiful scene.

The glade through which we had just walked lay before us. At our left the narrow road wound away under clumps of lordly trees, and was lost to sight amid the thickening forest. At the right the same road crosses the steep and picturesque bridge, near which stands a ruined tower which once guarded that pass; and beyond the bridge an abrupt eminence rises, covered with trees, and showing in the shadows some grey ivy-clustered rocks.

2. “Soft” is a literal transcription of the Irish expression “Tá sé bog,” “It is soft,” which means it is a damp or rainy day.

Over the sward and low grounds a thin film of mist was stealing, like smoke, marking the distances with a transparent veil; and here and there we could see the river faintly flashing in the moonlight.

No softer, sweeter scene could be imagined. The news I had just heard made it melancholy; but nothing could disturb its character of profound serenity, and the enchanted glory and vagueness of the prospect.

My father, who enjoyed the picturesque, and I, stood looking in silence over the expanse beneath us. The two good governesses, standing a little way behind us, discoursed upon the scene, and were eloquent upon the moon.

Madame Perrodon was fat, middle-aged, and romantic, and talked and sighed poetically. Mademoiselle De Lafontaine—in right of her father, who was a German, assumed to be psychological, metaphysical, and something of a mystic—now declared that when the moon shone with a light so intense it was well known that it indicated a special spiritual activity. The effect of the full moon in such a state of brilliancy was manifold. It acted on dreams, it acted on lunacy, it acted on nervous people; it had marvellous physical influences connected with life. Mademoiselle related that her cousin, who was mate of a merchant ship, having taken a nap on deck on such a night, lying on his back, with his face full in the light of the moon, had wakened, after a dream of an old woman clawing him by the cheek, with his features horribly drawn to one side; and his countenance had never quite recovered its equilibrium.

“The moon, this night,” she said, “is full of *odylic*³ and magnetic influence—and see, when you look behind you at the front of the schloss,

3. “Of or relating to the hypothetical force *odyle* or *Od*.” An “*od*” or “*odyle*” is defined as “a hypothetical force proposed by Baron Karl von Reichenbach as pervading all nature and accounting for various physical and psychological phenomena. The *Od* force was thought to manifest itself in certain persons of sensitive temperament by streaming from their fingertips, and to be exhibited especially by magnets, crystals, heat, light, and chemical action. It was held to account for the phenomena of mesmerism and animal magnetism, among other things” (*OED*). This word is

how all its windows flash and twinkle with that silvery splendour, as if unseen hands had lighted up the rooms to receive fairy guests.”

There are indolent states of the spirits in which, indisposed to talk ourselves, the talk of others is pleasant to our listless ears; and I gazed on, pleased with the tinkle of the ladies’ conversation.

“I have got into one of my moping moods to-night,” said my father, after a silence, and quoting Shakespeare, whom, by way of keeping up our English, he used to read aloud, he said:

“In truth I know not why I am so sad:
It wearies me; you say it wearies you;
But how I got it—came by it.”⁴

“I forget the rest. But I feel as if some great misfortune were hanging over us. I suppose the poor General’s afflicted letter has had something to do with it.”

At this moment the unwonted sound of carriage wheels and many hoofs upon the road, arrested our attention.

converted to “idyllic” in most later editions of the text, which changes the meaning dramatically.

4. An imperfect and incomplete rendering of the opening lines of Shakespeare’s comedy *The Merchant of Venice*, act I, scene i:

In sooth, I know not why I am so sad;
It wearies me, you say it wearies you;
But how I caught it, found it, or came by it,
What stuff ’tis made of, whereof it is born,
I am to learn;
And such a want-wit sadness makes of me,
That I have much ado to know myself.

Given the impending arrival of the vampire Carmilla to the estate, this quote is an ironic choice: the “cargo” conveyed in the carriage that is about to arrive on the scene is not precious, as Antonio’s merchant friends speculate of his cargo, but rather a predatory vampire, and the question “how I came by it” is answered, unbeknownst to Laura’s father, by the subsequent crash. “What stuff” their sadness is “made of” and “whereof it is born” the characters in *Carmilla* do indeed come to learn, much to their own sadness!

They seemed to be approaching from the high ground overlooking the bridge, and very soon the equipage emerged from that point. Two horsemen first crossed the bridge, then came a carriage drawn by four horses, and two men rode behind.

It seemed to be the travelling carriage of a person of rank; and we were all immediately absorbed in watching that very unusual spectacle. It became in a few moments greatly more interesting, for just as the carriage had passed the summit of the steep bridge, one of the leaders, taking fright, communicated his panic to the rest, and after a plunge or two, the whole team broke into a wild gallop together, and dashing between the horsemen who rode in front, came thundering along the road towards us with the speed of a hurricane.⁵

The excitement of the scene was made more painful by the clear, long-drawn screams of a female voice from the carriage window.

We all advanced in curiosity and horror; my father in silence, the rest with various ejaculations of terror.

Our suspense did not last long. Just before you reach the castle drawbridge, on the route they were coming, there stands by the roadside a magnificent lime-tree, on the other stands an ancient stone cross, at sight of which the horses, now going at a pace that was perfectly frightful, swerved so as to bring the wheel over the projecting roots of the tree.

I knew what was coming. I covered my eyes, unable to see it out, and turned my head away; at the same moment I heard a cry from my lady-friends, who had gone on a little.

Curiosity opened my eyes, and I saw a scene of utter confusion. Two of the horses were on the ground, the carriage lay upon its side with two wheels in the air; the men were busy removing the traces, and a lady, with a commanding air and figure, had got out, and stood with clasped hands, raising the handkerchief that was in them every now and then to her eyes. Through the carriage door was now lifted a

5. Commas around “taking fright” and after “plunge or two” added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

young lady, who appeared to be lifeless. My dear old father was already beside the elder lady, with his hat in his hand, evidently tendering his aid and the resources of his schloss. The lady did not appear to hear him, or to have eyes for anything but the slender girl who was being placed against the slope of the bank.

I approached; the young lady was apparently stunned, but she was certainly not dead. My father, who piqued himself on being something of a physician, had just had his fingers to her wrist and assured the lady, who declared herself her mother, that her pulse, though faint and irregular, was undoubtedly still distinguishable. The lady clasped her hands and looked upward, as if in a momentary transport of gratitude; but immediately she broke out again in that theatrical way which is, I believe, natural to some people.

She was what is called a fine looking woman for her time of life, and must have been handsome; she was tall, but not thin, and dressed in black velvet, and looked rather pale, but with a proud and commanding countenance, though now agitated strangely.

“Was ever being so born to calamity?” I heard her say, with clasped hands, as I came up. “Here am I, on a journey of life and death, in prosecuting which to lose an hour is possibly to lose all. My child will not have recovered sufficiently to resume her route for who can say how long. I must leave her; I cannot, dare not, delay. How far on, sir, can you tell me, is the nearest village? I must leave her there; and shall not see my darling, or even hear of her, till my return, three months hence.”

I plucked my father by the coat, and whispered earnestly in his ear: “Oh! papa, pray ask her to let her stay with us—it would be so delightful. Do, pray.”

“If Madame⁶ will entrust her child to the care of my daughter, and of her good gouvernante, Madame Perrodon, and permit her to remain as our guest, under my charge, until her return, it will confer

6. Capitalized in *In a Glass Darkly*; change maintained throughout this edition.

a distinction and an obligation upon us, and we shall treat her with all the care and devotion which so sacred a trust deserves.”

“I cannot do that, sir, it would be to task your kindness and chivalry too cruelly,” said the lady, distractedly.

“It would, on the contrary, be to confer on us a very great kindness at the moment when we most need it. My daughter has just been disappointed by a cruel misfortune, in a visit from which she had long anticipated a great deal of happiness. If you confide this young lady to our care it will be her best consolation. The nearest village on your route is distant, and affords no such inn as you could think of placing your daughter at; you cannot allow her to continue her journey for any considerable distance without danger. If, as you say, you cannot suspend your journey, you must part with her to-night, and nowhere could you do so with more honest assurances of care and tenderness than here.”

There was something in this lady’s air and appearance so distinguished, and even imposing, and in her manner so engaging, as to impress one, quite apart from the dignity of her equipage, with a conviction that she was a person of consequence.

By this time the carriage was replaced in its upright position, and the horses, quite tractable, in the traces again.

The lady threw on her daughter a glance which I fancied was not quite so affectionate as one might have anticipated from the beginning of the scene; then she beckoned slightly to my father, and withdrew two or three steps with him out of hearing; and talked to him with a fixed and stern countenance, not at all like that with which she had hitherto spoken.

I was filled with wonder that my father did not seem to perceive the change, and also unspeakably curious to learn what it could be that she was speaking, almost in his ear, with so much earnestness and rapidity.

Two or three minutes at most I think she remained thus employed, then she turned, and a few steps brought her to where her daughter lay, supported by Madame Perrodon. She kneeled beside her a moment

and whispered, as Madame supposed, a little benediction in her ear; then hastily kissing her she stepped into her carriage, the door was closed, the footmen in stately liveries jumped up behind, the outriders spurred on, the postillions cracked their whips, the horses plunged and broke suddenly into a furious canter that threatened soon again to become a gallop, and the carriage whirled away, followed at the same rapid pace by the two horsemen in the rear.

III

We Compare Notes

We followed the *cortege*¹ with our eyes until it was swiftly lost to sight in the misty wood; and the very sound of the hoofs and the wheels died away in the silent night air.

Nothing remained to assure us that the adventure had not been an illusion of a moment but the young lady, who just at that moment opened her eyes. I could not see, for her face was turned from me, but she raised her head, evidently looking about her, and I heard a very sweet voice ask complainingly, "Where is mamma?"

Our good Madame Perrodon answered tenderly, and added some comfortable assurances.

I then heard her ask:

"Where am I? What is this place?" and after that she said, "I don't see the carriage; and Matska, where is she?"

Madame answered all her questions in so far as she understood them; and gradually the young lady remembered how the misadventure came about, and was glad to hear that no one in, or in attendance on, the carriage was hurt; and on learning that her mamma had left her here, till her return in about three months, she wept.

I was going to add my consolations to those of Madame Perrodon when Mademoiselle De Lafontaine placed her hand upon my arm, saying:

1. Italics added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

“Don’t approach, one at a time is as much as she can at present converse with; a very little excitement would possibly overpower her now.”

As soon as she is comfortably in bed, I thought, I will run up to her room and see her.

My father in the meantime had sent a servant on horseback for the physician, who lived about two leagues away; and a bedroom was being prepared for the young lady’s reception.

The stranger now rose, and leaning on Madame’s arm, walked slowly over the drawbridge and into the castle gate.

In the hall,² servants waited to receive her, and she was conducted forthwith to her room.

The room we usually sat in as our drawing-room is long, having four windows, that looked over the moat and drawbridge, upon the forest scene I have just described.

It is furnished in old carved oak, with large carved cabinets, and the chairs are cushioned with crimson Utrecht velvet.³ The walls are covered with tapestry, and surrounded with great gold frames, the figures being as large as life, in ancient and very curious costume, and the subjects represented are hunting, hawking, and generally festive. It is not too stately to be extremely comfortable; and here we had our tea, for with his usual patriotic leanings he insisted that the national beverage should make its appearance regularly with our coffee and chocolate.

We sat here this night, and with candles lighted, were talking over the adventure of the evening.

Madame Perrodon and Mademoiselle De Lafontaine were both of our party. The young stranger had hardly lain down in her bed when she sank into a deep sleep; and those ladies had left her in the care of a servant.

“How do you like our guest?” I asked, as soon as Madame entered. “Tell me all about her?”

2. Comma added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

3. A particular plush type of velvet from Utrecht, Holland.

"I like her extremely," answered Madame, "she is, I almost think, the prettiest creature I ever saw; about your age, and so gentle and nice."

"She is absolutely beautiful," threw in Mademoiselle, who had peeped for a moment into the stranger's room.

"And such a sweet voice!" added Madame Perrodon.

"Did you remark a woman in the carriage, after it was set up again, who did not get out," inquired Mademoiselle, "but only looked from the window?"

"No, we had not seen her."

Then she described a hideous black woman, with a sort of coloured turban on her head, who was gazing all the time from the carriage window, nodding and grinning derisively towards the ladies, with gleaming eyes and large white eye-balls, and her teeth set as if in fury.

"Did you remark what an ill-looking pack of men the servants were?" asked Madame.

"Yes," said my father, who had just come in, "Ugly, hang-dog looking fellows, as ever I beheld in my life. I hope they mayn't rob the poor lady in the forest. They are clever rogues, however; they got everything to rights in a minute."

"I dare say they are worn out with too long travelling," said Madame; "Besides looking wicked, their faces were so strangely lean, and dark, and sullen. I am very curious, I own; but I dare say the young lady will tell us all about it to-morrow, if she is sufficiently recovered."

"I don't think she will," said my father, with a mysterious smile, and a little nod of his head, as if he knew more about it than he cared to tell us.

This made me all the more inquisitive as to what had passed between him and the lady in the black velvet, in the brief but earnest interview that had immediately preceded her departure.

We were scarcely alone, when I entreated him to tell me. He did not need much pressing.

"There is no particular reason why I should not tell you. She expressed a reluctance to trouble us with the care of her daughter, saying that she was in delicate health, and nervous, but not subject to

any kind of seizure—she volunteered that—nor to any illusion; being, in fact, perfectly sane.”

“How very odd to say all that!” I interpolated, “It was so unnecessary.”

“At all events it *was* said,” he laughed, “and as you wish to know all that passed, which was indeed very little, I tell you. She then said, ‘I am making a long journey of *vital* importance’—she emphasized the word—‘rapid and secret; I shall return for my child in three months; in the meantime, she will be silent as to who we are, whence we come, and whither we are travelling.’ That is all she said. She spoke very pure French. When she said the word ‘secret,’ she paused for a few seconds, looking sternly, her eyes fixed on mine. I fancy she makes a great point of that. You saw how quickly she was gone. I hope I have not done a very foolish thing, in taking charge of the young lady.”

For my part, I was delighted. I was longing to see and talk to her; and only waiting till the doctor should give me leave. You, who live in towns, can have no idea how great an event the introduction of a new friend is, in such a solitude as surrounded us.

The doctor did not arrive till nearly one o’clock; but I could no more have gone to my bed and slept, than I could have overtaken, on foot, the carriage in which the princess in black velvet had driven away.

When the physician came down to the drawing-room, it was to report very favourably upon his patient. She was now sitting up, her pulse quite regular, apparently perfectly well. She had sustained no injury, and the little shock to her nerves had passed away quite harmlessly. There could be no harm certainly in my seeing her, if we both wished it; and, with this permission, I sent, forthwith, to know whether she would allow me to visit her for a few minutes in her room.

The servant returned immediately to say that she desired nothing more.

You may be sure I was not long in availing myself of this permission.

Our visitor lay in one of the handsomest rooms in the schloss. It was, perhaps, a little stately. There was a sombre piece of tapestry opposite the foot of the bed, representing Cleopatra with the asps to her bosom; and other solemn classic scenes were displayed, a little

faded, upon the other walls. But there was gold carving, and rich and varied colour enough in the other decorations of the room, to more than redeem the gloom of the old tapestry.

There were candles at the bed side. She was sitting up; her slender pretty figure enveloped in the soft silk dressing gown, embroidered with flowers, and lined with thick quilted silk, which her mother had thrown over her feet as she lay upon the ground.

What was it that, as I reached the bed-side and had just begun my little greeting, struck me dumb in a moment, and made me recoil a step or two from before her? I will tell you.

I saw the very face which had visited me in my childhood at night, which remained so fixed in my memory, and on which I had for so many years so often ruminated with horror, when no one suspected of what I was thinking.

It was pretty, even beautiful; and when I first beheld it, wore the same melancholy expression.

But this almost instantly lighted into a strange fixed smile of recognition.

There was a silence of fully a minute, and then at length *she* spoke; *I* could not.

“How wonderful!” she exclaimed, “Twelve years ago, I saw your face in a dream, and it has haunted me ever since.”

“Wonderful, indeed!” I repeated, overcoming with an effort the horror that had for a time suspended my utterances. “Twelve years ago, in vision or reality, *I* certainly saw you. I could not forget your face. It has remained before my eyes ever since.”

Her smile had softened. Whatever I had fancied strange in it, was gone, and it and her dimpling cheeks were now delightfully pretty and intelligent.

I felt reassured, and continued more in the vein which hospitality indicated, to bid her welcome, and to tell her how much pleasure her accidental arrival had given us all, and especially what a happiness it was to me.

I took her hand as I spoke. I was a little shy, as lonely people are, but the situation made me eloquent, and even bold. She pressed my

hand, she laid hers upon it, and her eyes glowed, as, looking hastily into mine, she smiled again, and blushed.

She answered my welcome very prettily. I sat down beside her, still wondering; and she said:

“I must tell you my vision about you; it is so very strange that you and I should have had, each of the other so vivid a dream, that each should have seen, I you and you me, looking as we do now, when of course we both were mere children. I was a child, about six years old, and I awoke from a confused and troubled dream, and found myself in a room, unlike my nursery, wainscoted clumsily in some dark wood, and with cupboards and bedsteads, and chairs, and benches placed about it. The beds were, I thought, all empty, and the room itself without anyone but myself in it; and I, after looking about me for some time, and admiring especially an iron candlestick, with two branches, which I should certainly know again, crept under one of the beds to reach the window; but as I got from under the bed, I heard someone crying; and looking up, while I was still upon my knees, I saw *you*—most assuredly you—as I see you now; a beautiful young lady, with golden hair and large blue eyes, and lips—your lips—you, as you are here. Your looks won me; I climbed on the bed and put my arms about you, and I think we both fell asleep. I was roused by a scream; you were sitting up screaming. I was frightened, and slipped down upon the ground, and, it seemed to me, lost consciousness for a moment; and when I came to myself, I was again in my nursery at home. Your face I have never forgotten since. I could not be misled by mere resemblance. You *are* the lady whom I then saw.”

It was now my turn to relate my corresponding vision, which I did, to the undisguised wonder of my new acquaintance.

“I don’t know which should be most afraid of the other,” she said, again smiling—“If you were less pretty I think I should be very much afraid of you, but being as you are, and you and I both so young, I feel only that I have made your acquaintance twelve years ago, and have already a right to your intimacy; at all events it does seem as if we were destined, from our earliest childhood, to be friends. I wonder whether

you feel as strangely drawn towards me as I do to you; I have never had a friend—shall I find one now?” She sighed, and her fine dark eyes gazed passionately on me.

Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, “drawn towards her,” but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed. She interested and won me; she was so beautiful and so indescribably engaging.

I perceived now something of languor and exhaustion stealing over her, and hastened to bid her good night.

“The doctor thinks,” I added, “that you ought to have a maid to sit up with you to-night; one of ours is waiting, and you will find her a very useful and quiet creature.”

“How kind of you, but I could not sleep, I never could with an attendant in the room. I shan’t require any assistance—and, shall I confess my weakness, I am haunted with a terror of robbers. Our house was robbed once, and two servants murdered, so I always lock my door. It has become a habit—and you look so kind I know you will forgive me. I see there is a key in the lock.”

She held me close in her pretty arms for a moment and whispered in my ear, “Good night, darling, it is very hard to part with you, but good night; to-morrow, but not early, I shall see you again.”

She sank back on the pillow with a sigh, and her fine eyes followed me with a fond and melancholy gaze, and she murmured again, “Good night, dear friend.”

Young people like, and even love, on impulse. I was flattered by the evident, though as yet undeserved, fondness she showed me. I liked the confidence with which she at once received me. She was determined that we should be very near friends.

Next day came and we met again. I was delighted with my companion; that is to say, in many respects.

Her looks lost nothing in daylight—she was certainly the most beautiful creature I had ever seen, and the unpleasant remembrance of the face presented in my early dream, had lost the effect of the first unexpected recognition.

She confessed that she had experienced a similar shock on seeing me, and precisely the same faint antipathy that had mingled with my admiration of her. We now laughed together over our momentary horrors.

IV

Her Habits—A Saunter

I TOLD you that I was charmed with her in most particulars.

There were some that did not please me so well.

She was above the middle height of women. I shall begin by describing her. She was slender, and wonderfully graceful. Except that her movements were languid—*very* languid—indeed, there was nothing in her appearance to indicate an invalid. Her complexion was rich and brilliant; her features were small and beautifully formed; her eyes large, dark, and lustrous; her hair was quite wonderful, I never saw hair so magnificently thick and long when it was down about her shoulders; I have often placed my hands under it, and laughed with wonder at its weight. It was exquisitely fine and soft, and in colour a rich very dark brown, with something of gold. I loved to let it down, tumbling with its own weight, as, in her room, she lay back in her chair talking in her sweet low voice, I used to fold and braid it, and spread it out and play with it. Heavens! If I had but known all!

I said there were particulars which did not please me. I have told you that her confidence won me the first night I saw her; but I found that she exercised with respect to herself, her mother, her history, everything in fact connected with her life, plans, and people, an ever wakeful reserve. I dare say I was unreasonable, perhaps I was wrong; I dare say I ought to have respected the solemn injunction laid upon my father by the stately lady in black velvet. But curiosity is a restless and unscrupulous passion, and no one girl can endure, with

patience, that her's¹ should be baffled by another. What harm could it do anyone to tell me what I so ardently desired to know? Had she no trust in my good sense or honour? Why would she not believe me when I assured her, so solemnly, that I would not divulge one syllable of what she told me to any mortal breathing.

There was a coldness, it seemed to me, beyond her years, in her smiling melancholy persistent refusal to afford me the least ray of light.

I cannot say we quarrelled upon this point, for she would not quarrel upon any. It was, of course, very unfair of me to press her, very ill-bred, but I really could not help it; and I might just as well have let it alone.

What she did tell me amounted, in my unconscionable estimation to—nothing.

It was all summed up in three very vague disclosures:

First.—Her name was Carmilla.

Second.—Her family was very ancient and noble.

Third.—Her home lay in the direction of the west.

She would not tell me the name of her family, nor their armorial bearings, nor the name of their estate, nor even that of the country they lived in.

You are not to suppose that I worried her incessantly on these subjects. I watched opportunity, and rather insinuated than urged my inquiries. Once or twice, indeed, I did attack her more directly. But no matter what my tactics, utter failure was invariably the result. Reproaches and caresses were all lost upon her. But I must add this, that her evasion was conducted with so pretty a melancholy and deprecation, with so many, and even passionate declarations of her liking for me, and trust in my honour, and with so many promises that I should at last know all, that I could not find it in my heart long to be offended with her.

1. An irregular (and grammatically unsound) form of the possessive pronoun *hers*.

She used to place her pretty arms about my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek to mine, murmur with her lips near my ear, "Dearest, your little heart is wounded; think me not cruel because I obey the irresistible law of my strength and weakness; if your dear heart is wounded, my wild heart bleeds with yours. In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die—die, sweetly die—into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love; so for a while, seek to know no more of me and mine, but trust me with all your loving spirit."

And when she had spoken such a rhapsody, she would press me more closely in her trembling embrace, and her lips in soft kisses gently glow upon my cheek.

Her agitations and her language were unintelligible to me.

From these foolish embraces, which were not of very frequent occurrence, I must allow, I used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to fail me. Her murmured words sounded like a lullaby in my ear, and soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms.

In these mysterious moods I did not like her. I experienced a strange tumultuous excitement that was pleasurable, ever and anon, mingled with a vague sense of fear and disgust. I had no distinct thoughts about her while such scenes lasted, but I was conscious of a love growing into adoration, and also of abhorrence. This I know is paradox, but I can make no other attempt to explain the feeling.

I now write, after an interval of more than ten years, with a trembling hand, with a confused and horrible recollection of certain occurrences and situations, in the ordeal through which I was unconsciously passing; though with a vivid and very sharp remembrance of the main current of my story. But, I suspect, in all lives there are certain emotional scenes, those in which our passions have been most wildly and terribly roused, that are of all others the most vaguely and dimly remembered.

Sometimes after an hour of apathy, my strange and beautiful companion would take my hand and hold it with a fond pressure,

renewed again and again; blushing softly, gazing in my face with languid and burning eyes, and breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration. It was like the ardour of a lover; it embarrassed me; it was hateful and yet overpowering; and with gloating eyes she drew me to her, and her hot lips travelled along my cheek in kisses; and she would whisper, almost in sobs, "You are mine, you *shall* be mine, you and I are one for ever." Then she has thrown herself back in her chair, with her small hands over her eyes, leaving me trembling.

"Are we related," I used to ask; "what can you mean by all this? I remind you perhaps of someone whom you love; but you must not, I hate it; I don't know you—I don't know myself when you look so and talk so."

She used to sigh at my vehemence, then turn away and drop my hand.

Respecting these very extraordinary manifestations I strove in vain to form any satisfactory theory—I could not refer them to affectation or trick. It was unmistakably the momentary breaking out of suppressed instinct and emotion. Was she, notwithstanding her mother's volunteered denial, subject to brief visitations of insanity; or was there here a disguise and a romance? I had read in old story books of such things. What if a boyish lover had found his way into the house, and sought to prosecute his suit in masquerade, with the assistance of a clever old adventuress. But there were many things against this hypothesis, highly interesting as it was to my vanity.

I could boast of no little attentions such as masculine gallantry delights to offer. Between these passionate moments there were long intervals of commonplace, of gaiety, of brooding melancholy, during which, except that I detected her eyes so full of melancholy fire, following me, at times I might have been as nothing to her. Except in these brief periods of mysterious excitement her ways were girlish; and there was always a languor about her, quite incompatible with a masculine system in a state of health.

In some respects her habits were odd. Perhaps not so singular in the opinion of a town lady like you, as they appeared to us rustic

people. She used to come down very late, generally not till one o'clock, she would then take a cup of chocolate, but eat nothing; we then went out for a walk, which was a mere saunter, and she seemed, almost immediately, exhausted, and either returned to the schloss or sat on one of the benches that were placed, here and there, among the trees. This was a bodily languor in which her mind did not sympathise. She was always an animated talker, and very intelligent.

She sometimes alluded for a moment to her own home, or mentioned an adventure or situation, or an early recollection, which indicated a people of strange manners, and described customs of which we knew nothing. I gathered from these chance hints that her native country was much more remote than I had at first fancied.

As we sat thus one afternoon under the trees a funeral passed us by. It was that of a pretty young girl, whom I had often seen, the daughter of one of the rangers of the forest. The poor man was walking behind the coffin of his darling; she was his only child, and he looked quite heartbroken. Peasants walking two-and-two came behind, they were singing a funeral hymn.

I rose to mark my respect as they passed, and joined in the hymn they were very sweetly singing.

My companion shook me a little roughly, and I turned surprised.

She said, brusquely, "Don't you perceive how discordant that is?"

"I think it very sweet, on the contrary," I answered, vexed at the interruption, and very uncomfortable, lest the people who composed the little procession should observe and resent what was passing.

I resumed, therefore, instantly, and was again interrupted. "You pierce my ears," said Carmilla, almost angrily, and stopping her ears with her tiny fingers. "Besides, how can you tell that your religion and mine are the same; your forms wound me, and I hate funerals. What a fuss! Why *you* must die—*everyone* must die; and all are happier when they do. Come home."

"My father has gone on with the clergyman to the churchyard. I thought you knew she was to be buried to day."

"*She*? I don't trouble my head about peasants. I don't know who she is," answered Carmilla, with a flash from her fine eyes.

"She is the poor girl who fancied she saw a ghost a fortnight ago, and has been dying ever since, till yesterday, when she expired."

"Tell me nothing about ghosts. I shan't sleep to-night if you do."

"I hope there is no plague or fever coming; all this looks very like it," I continued. "The swineherd's young wife died only a week ago, and she thought something seized her by the throat as she lay in her bed, and nearly strangled her. Papa says such horrible fancies do accompany some forms of fever. She was quite well the day before. She sank afterwards, and died before a week."

"Well, *her* funeral is over, I hope, and *her* hymn sung; and our ears shan't be tortured with that discord and jargon. It has made me nervous. Sit down here, beside me; sit close; hold my hand; press it hard—hard—harder."

We had moved a little back, and had come to another seat.

She sat down. Her face underwent a change that alarmed and even terrified me for a moment. It darkened, and became horribly livid; her teeth and hands were clenched, and she frowned and compressed her lips, while she stared down upon the ground at her feet, and trembled all over with a continued shudder as irrepressible as ague. All her energies seemed strained to suppress a fit, with which she was then breathlessly tugging; and at length a low convulsive cry of suffering broke from her, and gradually the hysteria subsided. "There! That comes of strangling people with hymns!" she said at last. "Hold me, hold me still. It is passing away."

And so gradually it did; and perhaps to dissipate the sombre impression which the spectacle had left upon me, she became unusually animated and chatty; and so we got home.

This was the first time I had seen her exhibit any definable symptoms of that delicacy of health which her mother had spoken of. It was the first time, also, I had seen her exhibit anything like temper.

Both passed away like a summer cloud; and never but once afterwards did I witness on her part a momentary sign of anger. I will tell you how it happened.

She and I were looking out of one of the long drawing-room windows, when there entered the court-yard, over the drawbridge,

a figure of a wanderer whom I knew very well. He used to visit the schloss generally twice a year.

It was the figure of a hunchback, with the sharp lean features that generally accompany deformity. He wore a pointed black beard, and he was smiling from ear to ear, showing his white fangs. He was dressed in buff, black, and scarlet, and crossed with more straps and belts than I could count, from which hung all manner of things. Behind, he carried a magic-lantern,² and two boxes, which I well knew, in one of which was a salamander, and in the other a mandrake.³ These monsters used to make my father laugh. They were compounded of parts of monkeys, parrots, squirrels, fish, and hedgehogs, dried and stitched together with great neatness and startling effect. He had a fiddle, a box of conjuring apparatus, a pair of foils and masks⁴ attached to his belt, several other mysterious cases dangling about him, and a black staff with copper ferrules⁵ in his hand. His companion was a rough spare dog, that followed at his heels, but stopped short, suspiciously at the drawbridge, and in a little while began to howl dismally.

In the meantime, the mountebank,⁶ standing in the midst of the courtyard, raised his grotesque hat, and made us a very ceremonious bow, paying his compliments very volubly in execrable French, and German not much better. Then, disengaging his fiddle, he began to scrape a lively air, to which he sang with a merry discord, dancing with ludicrous airs and activity, that made me laugh, in spite of the dog's howling.

Then he advanced to the window with many smiles and salutations, and his hat in his left hand, his fiddle under his arm, and with a fluency that never took breath, he gabbled a long advertisement of all

2. A simple optical device using slides to display a magnified image on a white screen, wall, etc., in a darkened room (*OED*).

3. A poisonous plant thought to resemble humans and to have magical properties as an ingredient.

4. Instruments used in the sport of fencing.

5. Metal rings used to reinforce the tips of a staff or cane.

6. A public salesman of fake medicines, charms, and such things.



1. Engraving of “*Carmilla*,” drawn by M. Fitzgerald, engraved by C. M. Jenkin. From *The Dark Blue*, Dec. 1871. Courtesy of the Special Collections/Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

his accomplishments, and the resources of the various arts which he placed at our service, and the curiosities and entertainments which it was in his power, at our bidding, to display.

“Will your ladyships be pleased to buy an amulet against the oupire,⁷ which is going like the wolf, I hear, through these woods,”

7. Alternate spelling of *vampire*, probably meant here to give the usage a local or Eastern flavor.

he said, dropping his hat on the pavement. "They are dying of it right and left, and here is a charm that never fails; only pinned to the pillow, and you may laugh in his face."

These charms consisted of oblong slips of vellum, with cabalistic ciphers and diagrams upon them.

Carmilla instantly purchased one, and so did I.

He was looking up, and we were smiling down upon him, amused; at least, I can answer for myself. His piercing black eye, as he looked up in our faces, seemed to detect something that fixed for a moment his curiosity.

In an instant he unrolled a leather case, full of all manner of odd little steel instruments.

"See here, my lady," he said, displaying it, and addressing me, "I profess, among other things less useful, the art of dentistry. Plague take the dog!" he interpolated. "Silence, beast! He howls so that your ladyships can scarcely hear a word. Your noble friend, the young lady at your right, has the sharpest tooth,—long, thin, pointed, like an awl, like a needle; ha, ha! With my sharp and long sight, as I look up, I have seen it distinctly; now if it happens to hurt the young lady, and I think it must, here am I, here are my file, my punch, my nippers; I will make it round and blunt, if her ladyship pleases; no longer the tooth of a fish, but of a beautiful young lady as she is. Hey? Is the young lady displeased? Have I been too bold? Have I offended her?"

The young lady, indeed, looked very angry as she drew back from the window.

"How dares that mountebank insult us so? Where is your father? I shall demand redress from him. My father would have had the wretch tied up to the pump, and flogged with a cart-whip, and burnt to the bones with the castle brand!"

She retired from the window a step or two, and sat down, and had hardly lost sight of the offender, when her wrath subsided as suddenly as it had risen, and she gradually recovered her usual tone, and seemed to forget the little hunchback and his follies.

My father was out of spirits that evening. On coming in he told us that there had been another case very similar to the two fatal ones

which had lately occurred. The sister of a young peasant on his estate, only a mile away, was very ill, had been, as she described it, attacked very nearly in the same way, and was now slowly but steadily sinking.

"All this," said my father, "is strictly referable to natural causes. These poor people infect one another with their superstitions, and so repeat in imagination the images of terror that have infested their neighbours."

"But that very circumstance frightens one horribly," said Carmilla.

"How so?" inquired my father.

"I am so afraid of fancying I see such things; I think it would be as bad as reality."

"We are in God's hands; nothing can happen without his permission, and all will end well for those who love him. He is our faithful creator; He has made us all, and will take care of us."

"Creator! *Nature!*" said the young lady in answer to my gentle father. "And this disease that invades the country is natural. Nature. All things proceed from Nature—don't they? All things in the heaven, in the earth, and under the earth, act and live as Nature ordains? I think so."

"The doctor said he would come here to-day," said my father, after a silence. "I want to know what he thinks about it, and what he thinks we had better do."

"Doctors never did me any good," said Carmilla.

"Then you have been ill?" I asked.

"More ill than ever you were," she answered.

"Long ago?"

"Yes, a long time. I suffered from this very illness; but I forget all but my pain and weakness, and they were not so bad as are suffered in other diseases."

"You were very young then?"

"I dare say; let us talk no more of it. You would not wound a friend?" She looked languidly in my eyes, and passed her arm round my waist lovingly, and led me out of the room. My father was busy over some papers near the window.

“Why does your papa like to frighten us?” said the pretty girl, with a sigh and a little shudder.

“He doesn’t, dear Camilla, it is the very furthest thing from his mind.”

“Are you afraid, dearest?”

“I should be very much if I fancied there was any real danger of my being attacked as those poor people were.”

“You are afraid to die?”

“Yes, every one is.”

“But to die as lovers may—to die together, so that they may live together. Girls are caterpillars while they live in the world, to be finally butterflies when the summer comes; but in the meantime there are grubs and larvae, don’t you see—each with their peculiar propensities, necessities, and structure. So says Monsieur Buffon,⁸ in his big book, in the next room.”

Later in the day the doctor came, and was closeted with papa for some time. He was a skilful man, of sixty and upwards, he wore powder, and shaved his pale face as smooth as a pumpkin. He and papa emerged from the room together, and I heard papa laugh, and say as they came out:

“Well, I do wonder at a wise man like you. What do you say to hippogriffs⁹ and dragons?”

The doctor was smiling, and made answer, shaking his head—

“Nevertheless life and death are mysterious states, and we know little of the resources of either.”

And so they walked on, and I heard no more. I did not then know what the doctor had been broaching, but I think I guess it now.

8. Likely a reference to Georges-Louis Leclerc, Comte de Buffon, an influential eighteenth-century scientist and expert on natural history and author of *Les époques de la nature* (Paris: De l’Imprimerie Royale, 1780).

9. A mythical creature that is half horse and half griffin.

V

A Wonderful Likeness

This evening there arrived from Gratz¹ the grave, dark-faced son of the picture cleaner, with a horse and cart laden with two large packing cases, having many pictures in each. It was a journey of ten leagues, and whenever a messenger arrived at the schloss from our little capital of Gratz, we used to crowd about him in the hall, to hear the news.

This arrival created in our secluded quarters quite a sensation. The cases remained in the hall, and the messenger was taken charge of by the servants till he had eaten his supper. Then with assistants, and armed with hammer, ripping-chisel, and turnscrew,² he met us in the hall, where we had assembled to witness the unpacking of the cases.

Carmilla sat looking listlessly on, while one after the other the old pictures, nearly all portraits, which had undergone the process of renovation, were brought to light. My mother was of an old Hungarian family, and most of these pictures, which were about to be restored to their places, had come to us through her.

My father had a list in his hand, from which he read, as the artist rummaged out the corresponding numbers. I don't know that the pictures were very good, but they were, undoubtedly, very old, and

1. A reference to Graz, the capital of the Styrian state in Austria.

2. A screwdriver.

some of them very curious also. They had, for the most part, the merit of being now seen by me, I may say, for the first time; for the smoke and dust of time had all but obliterated them.

“There is a picture that I have not seen yet,” said my father. “In one corner, at the top of it, is the name, as well as I could read, ‘Marcia Karnstein,’ and the date ‘1698’; and I am curious to see how it has turned out.”

I remembered it; it was a small picture, about a foot and a half high, and nearly square, without a frame; but it was so blackened by age that I could not make it out.

The artist now produced it, with evident pride. It was quite beautiful; it was startling; it seemed to live. It was the effigy³ of Carmilla!

“Carmilla, dear, here is an absolute miracle. Here you are, living, smiling, ready to speak, in this picture. Isn’t it beautiful, papa? And see, even the little mole on her throat.”

My father laughed, and said “Certainly it is a wonderful likeness,” but he looked away, and to my surprise seemed but little struck by it, and went on talking to the picture cleaner, who was also something of an artist, and discoursed with intelligence about the portraits or other works, which his art had just brought out into light and colour, while *I* was more and more lost in wonder the more I looked at the picture.

“Will you let me hang this picture in my room, papa?” I asked.

“Certainly, dear,” said he, smiling, “I’m very glad you think it so like. It must be prettier even than I thought it, if it is.”

The young lady did not acknowledge this pretty speech, did not seem to hear it. She was leaning back in her seat, her fine eyes under their long lashes gazing on me in contemplation, and she smiled in a kind of rapture.

“And now you can read quite plainly the name that is written in the corner. It is not Marcia; it looks as if it was done in gold. The name is Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, and this is a little coronet over it, and

3. As used here, meaning “a model likeness.”

underneath A.D. 1698. I am descended from the Karnsteins; that is, mamma was.”

“Ah!” said the lady, languidly, “so am I, I think, a very long descent, very ancient. Are there any Karnsteins living now?”

“None who bear the name, I believe. The family were ruined, I believe, in some civil wars, long ago, but the ruins of the castle are only about three miles away.”

“How interesting!” she said, languidly, “But see what beautiful moonlight!” She glanced through the hall-door, which stood a little open. “Suppose you take a little ramble round the court, and look down at the road and river.”

“It is so like the night you came to us,” I said.

She sighed, smiling.

She rose, and each with her arm about the other’s waist, we walked out upon the pavement.

In silence, slowly we walked down to the drawbridge, where the beautiful landscape opened before us.

“And so you were thinking of the night I came here?” she almost whispered. “Are you glad I came?”

“Delighted, dear Carmilla,” I answered.

“And you asked for the picture you think like me, to hang in your room,” she murmured with a sigh, as she drew her arm closer about my waist, and let her pretty head sink upon my shoulder.

“How romantic you are, Carmilla,” I said. “Whenever you tell me your story, it will be made up chiefly of some one great romance.”

She kissed me silently.

“I am sure, Carmilla, you have been in love; that there is, at this moment, an affair of the heart going on.”

“I have been in love with no one, and never shall,” she whispered, “unless it should be with you.”⁴

How beautiful she looked in the moonlight!

4. The uncapitalized “unless” was given in *In a Glass Darkly*.

Shy and strange was the look with which she quickly hid her face in my neck and hair, with tumultuous sighs, that seemed almost to sob, and pressed in mine a hand that trembled.

Her soft cheek was glowing against mine. "Darling, darling," she murmured, "I live in you; and you would die for me, I love you so."

I started from her.

She was gazing on me with eyes from which all fire, all meaning had flown, and a face colourless and apathetic.

"Is there a chill in the air, dear?" she said drowsily. "I almost shiver; have I been dreaming? Let us come in. Come; come; come in."

"You look ill, Carmilla; a little faint. You certainly must take some wine," I said.⁵

"Yes, I will. I'm better now. I shall be quite well in a few minutes. Yes, do give me a little wine," answered Carmilla, as we approached the door. "Let us look again for a minute; it is the last time, perhaps, I shall see the moonlight with you."

"How do you feel now, dear Carmilla? Are you really better?" I asked.

I was beginning to take alarm, lest she should have been stricken with the strange epidemic that they said had invaded the country about us.

"Papa would be grieved beyond measure," I added, "if he thought you were ever so little ill, without immediately letting us know. We have a very skilful doctor near this, the physician who was with papa to-day."

"I'm sure he is. I know how kind you all are; but, dear child, I am quite well again. There is nothing ever wrong with me, but a little weakness. People say I am languid; I am incapable of exertion; I can scarcely walk as far as a child of three years old; and every now and then the little strength I have falters, and I become as you have just seen me. But after all I am very easily set up again; in a moment I am perfectly myself. See how I have recovered."

5. In this sentence, "certainly" was added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

So, indeed, she had; and she and I talked a great deal, and very animated she was; and the remainder of that evening passed without any recurrence of what I called her infatuations. I mean her crazy talk and looks, which embarrassed, and even frightened me.

But there occurred that night an event which gave my thoughts quite a new turn, and seemed to startle even Carmilla's languid nature into momentary energy.

VI

A Very Strange Agony

When we got into the drawing-room, and had sat down to our coffee and chocolate, although Carmilla did not take any, she seemed quite herself again, and Madame, and Mademoiselle De LaFontaine, joined us, and made a little card party, in the course of which papa came in for what he called his “dish of tea.”

When the game was over he sat down beside Carmilla on the sofa, and asked her, a little anxiously, whether she had heard from her mother since her arrival.

She answered “No.”

He then asked whether she knew where a letter would reach her at present.

“I cannot tell,” she answered ambiguously, “but I have been thinking of leaving you; you have been already too hospitable and too kind to me. I have given you an infinity of trouble, and I should wish to take a carriage to-morrow, and post in pursuit of her; I know where I shall ultimately find her, although I dare not yet tell you.”

“But you must not dream of any such thing,” exclaimed my father, to my great relief. “We can’t afford to lose you so, and I won’t consent to your leaving us, except under the care of your mother, who was so good as to consent to your remaining with us till she should herself return. I should be quite happy if I knew that you heard from her; but this evening the accounts of the progress of the mysterious disease that has invaded our neighbourhood, grow even more alarming; and my beautiful guest, I do feel the responsibility, unaided by advice from your mother, very much. But I shall do my best; and one thing

is certain, that you must not think of leaving us without her distinct direction to that effect. We should suffer too much in parting from you to consent to it easily."

"Thank you, sir, a thousand times for your hospitality," she answered, smiling bashfully. "You have all been too kind to me; I have seldom been so happy in all my life before, as in your beautiful chateau, under your care, and in the society of your dear daughter."

So he gallantly, in his old-fashioned way, kissed her hand, smiling and pleased at her little speech.

I accompanied Carmilla as usual to her room, and sat and chatted with her while she was preparing for bed.

"Do you think," I said at length, "that you will ever confide fully in me?"

She turned round smiling, but made no answer, only continued to smile on me.

"You won't answer that?" I said. "You can't answer pleasantly; perhaps I ought not to have asked you."

"You were quite right to ask me that, or anything. You do not know how dear you are to me, or you could not think any confidence too great to look for. But I am under vows, no nun half so awfully, and I dare not tell my story yet, even to you. The time is very near when you shall know everything. You will think me cruel, very selfish, but love is always selfish; the more ardent the more selfish. How jealous I am you cannot know. You must come with me, loving me, to death; or else hate me and still come with me, and *hating* me through death and after. There is no such word as indifference in my apathetic nature."

"Now, Carmilla, you are going to talk your wild nonsense again," I said hastily.

"Not I, silly little fool as I am, and full of whims and fancies; for your sake I'll talk like a sage. Were you ever at a ball?"

"No; how you do run on. What is it like? How charming it must be."

"I almost forget, it is years ago."

I laughed.

“You are not so old. Your first ball can hardly be forgotten yet.”

“I remember everything about it—with an effort. I see it all, as divers see what is going on above them, through a medium, dense, rippling, but transparent. There occurred that night what has confused the picture, and made its colours faint. I was all but assassinated in my bed, wounded *here*,” she touched her breast, “and never was the same since.”

“Were you near dying?”

“Yes, very—a cruel love—strange love, that would have taken my life. Love will have its sacrifices. No sacrifice without blood. Let us go to sleep now; I feel so lazy. How can I get up just now and lock my door?”

She was lying with her tiny hands buried in her rich wavy hair, under her cheek, her little head upon the pillow, and her glittering eyes followed me wherever I moved, with a kind of shy smile that I could not decipher.¹

I bid her good-night, and crept from the room with an uncomfortable sensation.

I often wondered whether our pretty guest ever said her prayers. *I* certainly had never seen her upon her knees. In the morning she never came down until long after our family prayers were over, and at night she never left the drawing-room to attend our brief evening prayers in the hall.

If it had not been that it had casually come out in one of our careless talks that she had been baptised, I should have doubted her being a Christian. Religion was a subject on which I had never heard her speak a word. If I had known the world better, this particular neglect or antipathy would not have so much surprised me.

The precautions of nervous people are infectious, and persons of a like temperament are pretty sure, after a time, to imitate them. I had adopted Carmilla’s habit of locking her bed-room door, having taken into my head all her whimsical alarms about midnight invaders and

1. Comma removed after “lying” in *In a Glass Darkly*.

prowling assassins. I had also adopted her precaution of making a brief search through her room, to satisfy herself that no lurking assassin or robber was “ensconced.”

These wise measures taken, I got into my bed and fell asleep.² A light was burning in my room. This was an old habit, of very early date, and which nothing could have tempted me to dispense with.

Thus fortified I might take my rest in peace. But dreams come through stone walls, light up dark rooms, or darken light ones, and their persons make their exits and their entrances as they please, and laugh at locksmiths.

I had a dream that night that was the beginning of a very strange agony.

I cannot call it a nightmare, for I was quite conscious of being asleep. But I was equally conscious of being in my room, and lying in bed, precisely as I actually was. I saw, or fancied I saw, the room and its furniture just as I had seen it last, except that it was very dark and I saw something moving round the foot of the bed, which at first I could not accurately distinguish. But I soon saw that it was a sooty-black animal that resembled a monstrous cat. It appeared to me about four or five feet long, for it measured fully the length of the hearth-rug as it passed over it; and it continued toing and froing with the lithe sinister restlessness of a beast in a cage. I could not cry out, although as you may suppose, I was terrified. Its pace was growing faster, and the room rapidly darker and darker, and at length so dark that I could no longer see anything of it but its eyes. I felt it spring lightly on the bed. The two broad eyes approached my face, and suddenly I felt a stinging pain as if two large needles darted, an inch or two apart, deep into my breast. I waked with a scream. The room was lighted by the candle that burnt there all through the night, and I saw a female figure standing at the foot of the bed, a little at the right side. It was in a dark loose dress, and its hair was down and covered its shoulders. A block of stone could not have been more still. There was not the

2. Comma added after “taken” in *In a Glass Darkly*.

slightest stir of respiration. As I stared at it the figure appeared to have changed its place, and was now nearer the door; then, close to it, the door opened, and it passed out.

I was now relieved, and able to breathe and move. My first thought was that Carmilla had been playing me a trick, and that I had forgotten to secure my door. I hastened to it, and found it locked as usual on the inside. I was afraid to open it—I was horrified. I sprang into my bed and covered my head up in the bed-clothes, and lay there more dead than alive till morning.

VII

Descending

It would be vain my attempting to tell you the horror with which, even now, I recall the occurrence of that night. It was no such transitory terror as a dream leaves behind it. It seemed to deepen by time, and communicated itself to the room and the very furniture that had encompassed the apparition.

I could not bear next day to be alone for a moment. I should have told papa, but for two opposite reasons. At one time I thought he would laugh at my story, and I could not bear its being treated as a jest; and at another, I thought he might fancy that I had been attacked by the mysterious complaint which had invaded our neighborhood.¹ I had myself no misgivings of the kind, and as he had been rather an invalid² for some time, I was afraid of alarming him.

I was comfortable enough with my good-natured companions, Madame Paradon, and the vivacious Mademoiselle de Lafontaine.³ They both perceived that I was out of spirits and nervous, and at length I told them what lay so heavy at my heart.

Mademoiselle laughed, but I fancied that Madame Paradon looked anxious.

1. Comma added after “another” in *In a Glass Darkly*.

2. As used here, meaning “a person prone to illness.”

3. Both the serialized version and *In a Glass Darkly* reflect this shift in chapter VII in the spelling of Madame Perrodon’s name and the change to lowercase “de” in “de Lafontaine.”

“By-the-bye,” said Mademoiselle, laughing, “the long lime-tree walk, behind Carmilla’s bedroom window, is haunted!”⁴

“Nonsense!” exclaimed Madame, who probably thought the theme rather inopportune, “and who tells that story, my dear?”

“Martin says that he came up twice, when the old yard gate was being repaired, before sunrise, and twice saw the same female figure walking down the lime-tree avenue.”⁵

“So he well might, as long as there are cows to milk in the river fields,” said Madame.

“I daresay; but Martin chooses to be frightened, and never did I see fool *more* frightened.”

“You must not say a word about it to Carmilla, because she can see down that walk from her room window,” I interposed, “and she is, if possible, a greater coward than I.”

Carmilla came down rather later than usual that day.

“I was so frightened last night,” she said, so soon as we were together, “and I am sure I should have seen something dreadful if it had not been for that charm I bought from the poor little hunchback whom I called such hard names. I had a dream of something black coming round my bed, and I awoke in a perfect horror, and I really thought, for some seconds, I saw a dark figure near the chimney-piece, but I felt under my pillow for my charm, and the moment my fingers touched it, the figure disappeared, and I felt quite certain, only that I had it by me, that something frightful would have made its appearance, and, perhaps, throttled me, as it did those poor people we heard of.”

“Well, listen to me,” I began, and recounted my adventure, at the recital of which she appeared horrified.

“And had you the charm near you?” she asked, earnestly.

“No, I had dropped it into a china vase in the drawing-room, but I shall certainly take it with me to-night, as you have so much faith in it.”

4. Hyphen removed in “bedroom window” in *In a Glass Darkly*. (I adopted this change.)

5. Hyphen in “yard gate” removed in *In a Glass Darkly*.

At this distance of time I cannot tell you, or even understand, how I overcame my horror so effectually as to lie alone in my room that night. I remember distinctly that I pinned the charm to my pillow. I fell asleep almost immediately, and slept even more soundly than usual all night.

Next night I passed as well. My sleep was delightfully deep and dreamless. But I wakened with a sense of lassitude and melancholy, which, however, did not exceed a degree that was almost luxurious.

"Well, I told you so," said Carmilla, when I described my quiet sleep, "I had such delightful sleep myself last night; I pinned the charm to the breast of my night-dress. It was too far away the night before. I am quite sure it was all fancy, except the dreams. I used to think that evil spirits made dreams, but our doctor told me it is no such thing. Only a fever passing by, or some other malady, as they often do, he said, knocks at the door, and not being able to get in, passes on, with that alarm."

"And what do you think the charm is?" said I.

"It has been fumigated or immersed in some drug, and is an antidote against the malaria," she answered.

"Then it acts only on the body?"

"Certainly; you don't suppose that evil spirits are frightened by bits of ribbon, or the perfumes of a druggist's shop? No, these complaints, wandering in the air, begin by trying the nerves, and so infect the brain, but before they can seize upon you, the antidote repels them. That I am sure is what the charm has done for us. It is nothing magical, it is simply natural."

I should have been happier if I could have quite agreed with Carmilla, but I did my best, and the impression was a little losing its force.

For some nights I slept profoundly; but still every morning I felt the same lassitude, and a languor weighed upon me all day. I felt myself a changed girl. A strange melancholy was stealing over me, a melancholy that I would not have interrupted. Dim thoughts of death began to open, and an idea that I was slowly sinking took gentle, and, somehow, not unwelcome, possession of me. If it was sad, the tone of mind which this induced was also sweet. Whatever it might be, my soul acquiesced in it.

I would not admit that I was ill, I would not consent to tell my papa, or to have the doctor sent for.

Carmilla became more devoted to me than ever, and her strange paroxysms of languid adoration more frequent. She used to gloat⁶ on me with increasing ardour the more my strength and spirits waned. This always shocked me like a momentary glare of insanity.

With knowing it, I was now in a pretty advanced stage of the strangest illness under which mortal ever suffered. There was an unaccountable fascination in its earlier symptoms that more than reconciled me to the incapacitating effect of that stage of the malady. This fascination increased for a time, until it reached a certain point, when gradually a sense of the horrible mingled itself with it, deepening, as you shall hear, until it discoloured and perverted the whole state of my life.

The first change I experienced was rather agreeable. It was very near the turning-point from which began the descent of Avernus.⁷

Certain vague and strange sensations visited me in my sleep. The prevailing one was of that pleasant, peculiar cold thrill which we feel in bathing, when we move against the current of a river. This was soon accompanied by dreams that seemed interminable, and were so vague that I could never recollect their scenery and persons, or any one connected portion of their action. But they left an awful impression, and a sense of exhaustion, as if I had passed through a long period of great mental exertion and danger. After all these dreams there remained on waking a remembrance of having been in a place very nearly dark, and of having spoken to people whom I could not see; and especially of one clear voice, of a female's, very deep, that spoke as if at a distance, slowly, and producing always the same sensation of indescribable solemnity and fear. Sometimes there came a sensation as if a hand was drawn softly along my cheek and neck. Sometimes it was as if

6. As used here, meaning "to focus on greedily or jealously."

7. The entrance to the Underworld in Greek mythology, as discussed in Virgil's *Aeneid*, book 6.

warm lips kissed me, and longer and more lovingly as they reached my throat, but there the caress fixed itself. My heart beat faster, my breathing rose and fell rapidly and full drawn; a sobbing, that rose into a sense of strangulation, supervened, and turned into a dreadful convulsion, in which my senses left me and I became unconscious.

It was now three weeks since the commencement of this unaccountable state. My sufferings had, during the last week, told upon my appearance. I had grown pale, my eyes were dilated and darkened underneath, and the languor which I had long felt began to display itself in my countenance.

My father asked me often whether I was ill; but, with an obstinacy which now seems to me unaccountable, I persisted in assuring him that I was quite well.

In a sense this was true. I had no pain, I could complain of no bodily derangement. My complaint seemed to be one of the imagination, or the nerves, and, horrible as my sufferings were, I kept them, with a morbid reserve, very nearly to myself.

It could not be that terrible complaint which the peasants called the oupire, for I had now been suffering for three weeks, and they were seldom ill for much more than three days, when death put an end to their miseries.

Carmilla complained of dreams and feverish sensations, but by no means of so alarming a kind of as mine. I say that mine were extremely alarming. Had I been capable of comprehending my condition, I would have invoked aid and advice on my knees. The narcotic of an unsuspected influence was acting upon me, and my perceptions were benumbed.

I am going to tell you now of a dream that led immediately to an odd discovery.

One night, instead of the voice I was accustomed to hear in the dark, I heard one, sweet and tender, and at the same time terrible, which said, "Your mother warns you to beware of the assassin." At the same time a light unexpectedly sprang up, and I saw Carmilla, standing, near the foot of my bed, in her white night-dress, bathed, from her chin to her feet, in one great stain of blood.



2. Engraving of “*Carmilla*,” drawn by D. H. Friston, engraved by C. M. Jenkin. From *The Dark Blue*, Feb. 1872. Courtesy of the Special Collections/Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

I wakened with a shriek, possessed with the one idea that Carmilla was being murdered. I remember springing from my bed, and my next recollection is that of standing on the lobby,⁸ crying for help.

Madame and Mademoiselle came scurrying out of their rooms in alarm; a lamp burned always on the lobby, and seeing me, they soon learned the cause of my terror.

8. In the hallway or foyer.

I insisted on our knocking at Carmilla's door. Our knocking was unanswered. It soon became a pounding and an uproar. We shrieked her name, but all was vain.

We all grew frightened, for the door was locked. We hurried back, in panic, to my room. There we rang the bell long and furiously. If my father's room had been at that side of the house, we would have called him up at once to our aid. But, alas! he was quite out of hearing, and to reach him involved an excursion for which we none of us had courage.

Servants, however, soon came running up the stairs; I had got on my dressing-gown and slippers meanwhile, and my companions were already similarly furnished. Recognising the voices of the servants on the lobby, we sallied out together; and having renewed, as fruitlessly, our summons at Carmilla's door, I ordered the men to force the lock. They did so, and we stood, holding our lights aloft, in the doorway, and so stared into the room.

We called her name; but there was still no reply. We looked round the room. Everything was undisturbed. It was exactly in the state in which I had left it on bidding her good night. But Carmilla was gone.

VIII

Search

At sight of the room, perfectly undisturbed except for our violent entrance, we began to cool a little, and soon recovered our senses sufficiently to dismiss the men. It had struck Mademoiselle that possibly Carmilla had been wakened by the uproar at her door, and in her first panic had jumped from her bed, and hid herself in a press,¹ or behind a curtain, from which she could not, of course, emerge until the majordomo and his myrmidons² had withdrawn. We now recommenced our search, and began to call her by name again.

It was all to no purpose. Our perplexity and agitation increased. We examined the windows, but they were secured. I implored of Carmilla, if she had concealed herself, to play this cruel trick no longer—to come out, and to end our anxieties. It was all useless. I was by this time convinced that she was not in the room, nor in the dressing-room, the door of which was still locked on this side. She could not have passed it. I was utterly puzzled. Had Carmilla discovered one of those secret passages which the old housekeeper said were known to exist in the schloss, although the tradition of their exact situation had been lost. A little time would, no doubt, explain all—utterly perplexed as, for the present, we were.

1. A large shuttered cabinet able to store clothes and large enough for a person.

2. “In translations of Homer (*Iliad* 2. 684) or with reference to the Homeric story: a member of a warlike people inhabiting ancient Thessaly, whom Achilles led to the siege of Troy” (*OED*).

It was past four o'clock, and I preferred passing the remaining hours of darkness in Madame's room. Daylight brought no solution of the difficulty.

The whole household, with my father at its head, was in a state of agitation next morning. Every part of the chateau was searched. The grounds were explored. Not a trace of the missing lady could be discovered. The stream was about to be dragged; my father was in distraction; what a tale to have to tell the poor girl's mother on her return. I, too, was almost beside myself, though my grief was quite of a different kind.

The morning was passed in alarm and excitement. It was now one o'clock, and still no tidings. I ran up to Carmilla's room, and found her standing at her dressing-table. I was astounded. I could not believe my eyes. She beckoned me to her with her pretty finger, in silence. Her face expressed extreme fear.

I ran to her in ecstasy of joy; I kissed and embraced her again and again. I ran to the bell and rang it vehemently, to bring others to the spot, who might at once relieve my father's anxiety.

"Dear Carmilla, what has become of you all this time? We have been in agonies of anxiety about you," I exclaimed. "Where have you been? How did you come back?"

"Last night has been a night of wonders," she said.

"For mercy's sake, explain all you can."

"It was past two last night," she said, "when I went to sleep as usual in my bed, with my doors locked, that of the dressing-room, and that opening upon the gallery.³ My sleep was uninterrupted, and, so far as I know, dreamless; but I awoke just now on the sofa in the dressing-room there, and I found the door between the rooms open, and the other door forced. How could all this have happened without my being wakened? It must have been accompanied with a great deal of noise and I am particularly easily wakened; and how could I have been carried out of my bed without my sleep having been interrupted, I whom the slightest stir startles?"

3. Comma added after "night" in *In a Glass Darkly*.

By this time, Madame, Mademoiselle, my father, and a number of the servants were in the room. Carmilla was, of course, overwhelmed with enquiries, congratulations, and welcomes. She had but one story to tell, and seemed the least able of all the party to suggest any way of accounting for what had happened.

My father took a turn up and down the room, thinking. I saw Carmilla's eye follow him for a moment with a sly, dark glance.

When my father had sent the servants away, Mademoiselle having gone in search of a little bottle of valerian and sal-volatile,⁴ and there being no one now in the room with Carmilla, except my father, Madame, and myself, he came to her thoughtfully, took her hand very kindly, led her to the sofa, and sat down beside her.

"Will you forgive me, my dear, if I risk a conjecture, and ask a question?"

"Who can have a better right?" she said. "Ask what you please, and I will tell you everything. But my story is simply one of bewilderment and darkness. I know absolutely nothing. Put any question you please. But you know, of course, the limitations mamma has placed me under?"

"Perfectly, my dear child. I need not approach the topics on which she desires our silence. Now, the marvel of last night consists in your having been removed from your bed and your room, without being wakened, and this removal⁵ having occurred apparently while the windows were still secured, and the two doors locked upon the inside. I will tell you my theory, and first ask you a question."

Carmilla was leaning on her hand dejectedly; Madame and I were listening breathlessly.

"Now, my question is this. Have you ever been suspected of walking in your sleep?"

"Never, since I was very young indeed."

4. Valerian is an herb and sal-volatile a solution used to awaken people from fainting spells, like smelling salts.

5. The spelling "removal's" was changed to "removal" in *In a Glass Darkly*.

“But you did walk in your sleep when you were young?”

“Yes; I know I did. I have been told so often by my old nurse.” My father smiled and nodded.

“Well, what has happened is this. You got up in your sleep, unlocked the door, not leaving the key, as usual, in the lock, but taking it out and locking it on the outside; you again took the key out, and carried it away with you to some one of the five-and-twenty rooms on this floor, or perhaps up-stairs or down-stairs. There are so many rooms and closets, so much heavy furniture, and such accumulations of lumber,⁶ that it would require a week to search this old house thoroughly. Do you see, now, what I mean?”

“I do, but not all,” she answered.

“And how, papa, do you account for her finding herself on the sofa in the dressing-room, which we had searched so carefully?”

“She came there after you had searched it, still in her sleep, and at last awoke spontaneously, and was as much surprised to find herself where she was as any one else. I wish all mysteries were as easily and innocently explained as yours, Carmilla,” he said, laughing. “And so we may congratulate ourselves on the certainty that the most natural explanation of the occurrence is one that involves no drugging, no tampering with locks, no burglars, or poisoners, or witches—nothing that need alarm Carmilla, or any one else, for our safety.”

Carmilla was looking charmingly. Nothing could be more beautiful than her tints.⁷ Her beauty was, I think, enhanced by that graceful languor that was peculiar to her. I think my father was silently contrasting her looks with mine, for he said:

“I wish my poor Laura was looking more like herself”; and he sighed.

So our alarms were happily ended, and Carmilla restored to her friends.

6. Unused, presumably wooden furniture.

7. Shadings of skin tone, coloring.

IX

The Doctor

As Carmilla would not hear of an attendant sleeping in her room, my father arranged that a servant should sleep outside her door, so that she could not attempt to make another such excursion without being arrested at her own door.

That night passed quietly; and next morning early, the doctor, whom my father had sent for without telling me a word about it, arrived to see me.

Madame accompanied me to the library; and there the grave little doctor, with white hair and spectacles, whom I mentioned before, was waiting to receive me.

I told him my story, and as I proceeded he grew graver and graver.

We were standing, he and I, in the recess of one of the windows, facing one another. When my statement was over, he leaned with his shoulders against the wall, and with his eyes fixed on me earnestly, with an interest in which was a dash of horror.

After a minute's reflection, he asked Madame if he could see my father.

He was sent for accordingly, and as he entered, smiling, he said, "I dare say, doctor, you are going to tell me that I am an old fool for having brought you here; I hope I am."

But his smile faded into shadow as the doctor, with a very grave face, beckoned him to him.

He and the doctor talked for some time in the same recess where I had just conferred with the physician. It seemed an earnest and argumentative conversation. The room is very large, and I and Madame

stood together, burning with curiosity, at the further end. Not a word could we hear, however, for they spoke in a very low tone, and the deep recess of the window quite concealed the doctor from view, and very nearly my father, whose foot, arm, and shoulder only could we see; and the voices were, I suppose, all the less audible for the sort of closet which the thick wall and window formed.

After a time my father's face looked into the room; it was pale, thoughtful, and, I fancied, agitated.

"Laura, dear, come here for a moment. Madame, we shan't trouble you, the doctor says, at present."

Accordingly I approached, for the first time a little alarmed; for, although I felt very weak, I did not feel ill; and strength, one always fancies, is a thing that may be picked up when we please.

My father held out his hand to me, as I drew near, but he was looking at the doctor, and he said:

"It certainly *is* very odd; I don't understand it quite. Laura, come here, dear; now attend to Doctor Spielsberg, and recollect yourself."

"You mentioned a sensation like that of two needles piercing the skin; somewhere about your neck, on the night when you experienced your first horrible dream. Is there still any soreness?"

"None at all," I answered.

"Can you indicate with your finger about the point at which you think this occurred?"

"Very little below my throat—*here*," I answered.

I wore a morning dress, which covered the place I pointed to.

"Now you can satisfy yourself," said the doctor. "You won't mind your papa's lowering your dress a very little. It is necessary, to detect a symptom of the complaint under which you have been suffering."

I acquiesced. It was only an inch or two below the edge of my collar.

"God bless me!—so it is," exclaimed my father, growing pale.

"You see it now with your own eyes," said the doctor, with a gloomy triumph.

"What is it?" I exclaimed, beginning to be frightened.

“Nothing, my dear young lady, but a small blue spot, about the size of the tip of your little finger; and now,” he continued, turning to papa, “the question is what is best to be done?”

“Is there any danger?” I urged, in great trepidation.

“I trust not, my dear,” answered the doctor. “I don’t see why you should not recover. I don’t see why you should not begin *immediately* to get better. That is the point at which the sense of strangulation begins?”

“Yes,” I answered.

“And—recollect as well as you can—the same point was a kind of centre of that thrill which you described just now, like the current of a cold stream running against you?”

“It may have been; I think it was.”

“Ay, you see?” he added, turning to my father. “Shall I say a word to Madame?”

“Certainly,” said my father.

He called Madame to him, and said:

“I find my young friend here far from well. It won’t be of any great consequence, I hope; but it will be necessary that some steps be taken, which I will explain by-and-bye; but in the meantime, Madame, you will be so good as not to let Miss Laura be alone for one moment. That is the only direction I need give for the present. It is indispensable.”

“We may rely upon your kindness, Madame, I know,” added my father.

Madame satisfied him eagerly.

“And you, dear Laura, I know you will observe the doctor’s direction.”

“I shall have to ask your opinion upon another patient, whose symptoms slightly resemble those of my daughter, that have just been detailed to you—very much milder in degree, but I believe quite of the same sort. She is a young lady—our guest; but as you say you will be passing this way again this evening, you can’t do better than take your supper here, and you can then see her. She does not come down till the afternoon.”

"I thank you," said the doctor. "I shall be with you, then, at about seven this evening."

And then they repeated their directions to me and to Madame, and with this parting charge my father left us, and walked out with the doctor; and I saw them pacing together up and down between the road and the moat, on the grassy platform in front of the castle, evidently absorbed in earnest conversation.

The doctor did not return. I saw him mount his horse there, take his leave, and ride away eastward through the forest.

Nearly at the same time I saw the man arrive from Dranfeld with the letters, and dismount and hand the bag to my father.

In the meantime, Madame and I were both busy, lost in conjecture as to the reasons of the singular and earnest direction which the doctor and my father had concurred in imposing. Madame, as she afterwards told me, was afraid the doctor apprehended a sudden seizure, and that, without prompt assistance, I might either lose my life in a fit, or at least be seriously hurt. This interpretation did not strike me; and I fancied, perhaps luckily for my nerves, that the arrangement was prescribed simply to secure a companion, who would prevent my taking too much exercise, or eating unripe fruit, or doing any of the fifty foolish things to which young people are supposed to be prone.

About half-an-hour after my father came in—he had a letter in his hand—and said:

"This letter has been delayed; it is from General Spielsdorf. He might have been here yesterday, he may not come till to-morrow, or he may be here to-day." He put the open letter into my hand; but he did not look pleased, as he used when a guest, especially one so much loved as the General, was coming. On the contrary, he looked as if he wished him at the bottom of the Red Sea. There was plainly something on his mind which he did not choose to divulge.

"Papa, darling, will you tell me this?" said I, suddenly laying my hand on his arm, and looking, I am sure, imploringly in his face.

"Perhaps," he answered, smoothing my hair caressingly over my eyes.

"Does the doctor think me very ill?"

“No, dear; he thinks, if right steps are taken, you will be quite well again, at least, on the high road to a complete recovery, in a day or two,” he answered, a little drily. “I wish our good friend, the General, had chosen any other time; that is, I wish you had been perfectly well to receive him.”

“But do tell me, papa,” I insisted, “*what* does he think is the matter with me?”

“Nothing; you must not plague me with questions,” he answered, with more irritation than I ever remember him to have displayed before; and seeing that I looked wounded, I suppose, he kissed me, and added, “You shall know all about it in a day or two; that is, all that I know. In the meantime you are not to trouble your head about it.”

He turned and left the room, but came back before I had done wondering and puzzling over the oddity of all this; it was merely to say that he was going to Karnstein, and had ordered the carriage to be ready at twelve, and that I and Madame should accompany him; he was going to see the priest who lived near those picturesque grounds, upon business, and as Carmilla had never seen them, she could follow, when she came down, with Mademoiselle, who would bring materials for what you call a pic-nic, which might be laid for us in the ruined castle.

At twelve o’clock, accordingly, I was ready, and not long after my father, Madame, and I set out upon our projected drive.

Passing the drawbridge we turn to the right, and follow the road over the steep gothic bridge, westward, to reach the deserted village and ruined castle of Karnstein. No sylvan drive can be fancied prettier. The ground breaks into gentle hills and hollows, all clothed with beautiful wood, totally destitute of the comparative formality which artificial planting and early culture and pruning impart.

The irregularities of the ground often lead the road out of its course, and cause it to wind beautifully round the sides of broken hollows and the steeper sides of the hills, among varieties of ground almost inexhaustible.

Turning one of these points, we suddenly encountered our old friend, the old General, riding towards us, attended by a mounted

servant.¹ His portmanteaus were following in a hired waggon, such as we term a cart.

The General dismounted as we pulled up, and, after the usual greetings, was easily persuaded to accept the vacant seat in the carriage, and send his horse on with his servant to the schloss.

1. The phrase “our old friend” was added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

X

Bereaved

It was about ten months since we had last seen him; but that time had sufficed to make an alteration of years in his appearance. He had grown thinner; something of gloom and anxiety had taken the place of that cordial serenity which used to characterise his features. His dark blue eyes, always penetrating, now gleamed with a sterner light from under his shaggy grey eyebrows. It was not such a change as grief alone usually induces, and angrier passions seemed to have had their share in bringing it about.

We had not long resumed our drive, when the General began to talk, with his usual soldierly directness, of the bereavement, as he termed it, which he had sustained in the death of his beloved niece and ward; and he then broke out in a tone of intense bitterness and fury, inveighing against the “hellish arts” to which she had fallen a victim, and expressing, with more exasperation than piety, his wonder that Heaven should tolerate so monstrous an indulgence of the lusts and malignity of hell.

My father, who saw at once that something very extraordinary had befallen, asked him, if not too painful to him, to detail the circumstances which he thought justified the strong terms in which he expressed himself.

“I should tell you all with pleasure,” said the General, “but you would not believe me.”

“Why should I not?” he asked.

“Because,” he answered testily, “you believe in nothing but what consists with your own prejudices and illusions. I remember when I was like you, but I have learned better.”

“Try me,” said my father; “I am not such a dogmatist as you suppose. Besides which, I very well know that you generally require proof for what you believe, and am, therefore, very strongly pre-disposed to respect your conclusions.”

“You are right in supposing that I have not been led lightly into a belief in the marvellous—for what I have experienced *is* marvellous—and I have been forced by extraordinary evidence to credit that which ran counter, diametrically, to all my theories. I have been made the dupe of a preternatural conspiracy.”

Notwithstanding his professions of confidence in the General’s penetration, I saw my father, at this point, glance at the General, with, as I thought, a marked suspicion of his sanity.

The General did not see it, luckily. He was looking gloomily and curiously into the glades and vistas of the woods that were opening before us.

“You are going to the Ruins of Karnstein?” he said. “Yes, it is a lucky coincidence; do you know I was going to ask you to bring me there to inspect them. I have a special object in exploring. There is a ruined chapel, ain’t there, with a great many tombs of that extinct family?”¹

“So there are—highly interesting,” said my father. “I hope you are thinking of claiming the title and estates?”

My father said this gaily, but the General did not recollect the laugh, or even the smile, which courtesy exacts for a friend’s joke; on the contrary, he looked grave and even fierce, ruminating on a matter that stirred his anger and horror.

“Something very different,” he said, gruffly. “I mean to unearth some of those fine people. I hope, by God’s blessing, to accomplish a pious sacrilege here, which will relieve our earth of certain monsters,

1. Apostrophe in “ain’t” added in *In a Glass Darkly*.

and enable honest people to sleep in their beds without being assailed by murderers. I have strange things to tell you, my dear friend, such as I myself would have scouted as incredible a few months since."

My father looked at him again, but this time not with a glance of suspicion—with an eye, rather, of keen intelligence and alarm.

"The house of Karnstein," he said, "has been long extinct: a hundred years at least. My dear wife was maternally descended from the Karnsteins. But the name and title have long ceased to exist. The castle is a ruin; the very village is deserted; it is fifty years since the smoke of a chimney was seen there; not a roof left."

"Quite true. I have heard a great deal about that since I last saw you; a great deal that will astonish you. But I had better relate everything in the order in which it occurred," said the General. "You saw my dear ward—my child, I may call her. No creature could have been more beautiful, and only three months ago none more blooming."

"Yes, poor thing! when I saw her last she certainly was quite lovely," said my father. "I was grieved and shocked more than I can tell you, my dear friend; I knew what a blow it was to you."

He took the General's hand, and they exchanged a kind pressure. Tears gathered in the old soldier's eyes. He did not seek to conceal them. He said:

"We have been very old friends; I knew you would feel for me, childless as I am. She had become an object of very near interest to me, and repaid my care by an affection that cheered my home and made my life happy. That is all gone. The years that remain to me on earth may not be very long; but by God's mercy I hope to accomplish a service to mankind before I die, and to subserve the vengeance of Heaven upon the fiends who have murdered my poor child in the spring of her hopes and beauty!"

"You said, just now, that you intended relating everything as it occurred," said my father. "Pray do; I assure you that it is not mere curiosity that prompts me."

By this time we had reached the point at which the Drun stall road, by which the General had come, diverges from the road which we were travelling to Karnstein.

“How far is it to the ruins?” inquired the General, looking anxiously forward.²

“About half a league,” answered my father. “Pray let us hear the story you were so good to promise.”

2. The original “enquired” changed to “inquired” in *In a Glass Darkly*.

XI

The Story

“With all my heart,” said the General, with an effort; and after a short pause in which to arrange his subject, he commenced one of the strangest narratives I had ever heard.

“My dear child was looking forward with great pleasure to the visit you had been so good as to arrange for her to your charming daughter.” Here he made me a gallant but melancholy bow. “In the meantime we had an invitation to my old friend the Count Carlsfeld, whose schloss is about six leagues to the other side of Karnstein. It was to attend the series of fêtes which, you remember, were given by him in honour of his illustrious visitor, the Grand Duke Charles.”

“Yes; and very splendid, I believe, they were,” said my father.

“Princely! But then his hospitalities are quite regal. He has Aladdin’s lamp.¹ The night from which my sorrow dates was devoted to a magnificent masquerade. The grounds were thrown open, the trees hung with coloured lamps. There was such a display of fireworks as Paris itself has never witnessed. And such music—music, you know, is my weakness—such ravishing music! The finest instrumental band, perhaps, in the world, and the finest singers who could be collected from all the great operas in Europe. As you wandered through these fantastically illuminated grounds, the moon-lighted chateau throwing

3. Reference to a lamp that contained a genie who could grant wishes to the lamp’s holder. The implication is that the count is an excellent host.

a rosy light from its long rows of windows, you would suddenly hear these ravishing voices stealing from the silence of some grove, or rising from boats upon the lake. I felt myself, as I looked and listened, carried back into the romance and poetry of my early youth.

“When the fireworks were ended, and the ball beginning, we returned to the noble suite of rooms that were thrown open to the dancers. A masked ball, you know, is a beautiful sight; but so brilliant a spectacle of the kind I never saw before.

“It was a very aristocratic assembly. I was myself almost the only ‘nobody’ present.

“My dear child was looking quite beautiful. She wore no mask. Her excitement and delight added an unspeakable charm to her features, always lovely. I remarked a young lady, dressed magnificently, but wearing a mask, who appeared to me to be observing my ward with extraordinary interest. I had seen her, earlier in the evening, in the great hall, and again, for a few minutes, walking near us, on the terrace under the castle windows, similarly employed. A lady, also masked, richly and gravely dressed, and with a stately air, like a person of rank, accompanied her as a chaperon. Had the young lady not worn a mask, I could, of course, have been much more certain upon the question whether she was really watching my poor darling. I am now well assured that she was.

“We were now in one of the *salons*. My poor dear child had been dancing, and was resting a little in one of the chairs near the door; I was standing near. The two ladies I have mentioned had approached, and the younger took the chair next my ward; while her companion stood beside me, and for a little time addressed herself, in a low tone, to her charge.

Availing herself of the privilege of her mask, she turned to me, and in the tone of an old friend, and calling me by my name, opened a conversation with me, which piqued my curiosity a good deal. She referred to many scenes where she had met me—at Court, and at distinguished houses. She alluded to little incidents which I had long ceased to think of, but which, I found, had only lain in abeyance in my memory, for they instantly started into life at her touch.

“I became more and more curious to ascertain who she was, every moment. She parried my attempts to discover very adroitly and pleasantly. The knowledge she showed of many passages in my life seemed to me all but unaccountable; and she appeared to take a not unnatural pleasure in foiling my curiosity, and in seeing me flounder, in my eager perplexity, from one conjecture to another.

“In the meantime the young lady, whom her mother called by the odd name of Millarca, when she once or twice addressed her, had, with the same ease and grace, got into conversation with my ward.

“She introduced herself by saying that her mother was a very old acquaintance of mine. She spoke of the agreeable audacity which a mask rendered practicable; she talked like a friend; she admired her dress, and insinuated very prettily her admiration of her beauty. She amused her with laughing criticisms upon the people who crowded the ball-room, and laughed at my poor child’s fun. She was very witty and lively when she pleased, and after a time they had grown very good friends, and the young stranger lowered her mask, displaying a remarkably beautiful face. I had never seen it before, neither had my dear child. But though it was new to us, the features were so engaging, as well as lovely, that it was impossible not to feel the attraction powerfully. My poor girl did so. I never saw anyone more taken with another at first sight, unless, indeed, it was the stranger herself, who seemed quite to have lost her heart to her.

“In the meantime, availing myself of the licence of a masquerade, I put not a few questions to the elder lady.

““You have puzzled me utterly,” I said, laughing. ‘Is that not enough? won’t you, now, consent to stand on equal terms, and do me the kindness to remove your mask?’

““Can any request be more unreasonable?” she replied. ‘Ask a lady to yield an advantage! Beside, how do you know you should recognise me? Years make changes.’

““As you see,” I said, with a bow, and, I suppose, a rather melancholy little laugh.

““As philosophers tell us,” she said; ‘and how do you know that a sight of my face would help you?’

“‘I should take chance for that,’ I answered. ‘It is vain trying to make yourself out an old woman; your figure betrays you.’

“‘Years, nevertheless, have passed since I saw you, rather since you saw me, for that is what I am considering. Millarca, there, is my daughter; I cannot then be young, even in the opinion of people whom time has taught to be indulgent, and I may not like to be compared with what you remember me. You have no mask to remove. You can offer me nothing in exchange.’

“‘My petition is to your pity, to remove it.’

“‘And mine to yours, to let it stay where it is,’ she replied.

“‘Well, then, at least you will tell me whether you are French or German; you speak both languages so perfectly.’

“‘I don’t think I shall tell you that, General; you intend a surprise, and are meditating the particular point of attack.’

“‘At all events, you won’t deny this,’ I said, ‘that being honoured by your permission to converse, I ought to know how to address you. Shall I say Madame la Comtesse?’

“‘She laughed, and she would, no doubt, have met me with another evasion—if, indeed, I can treat any occurrence in an interview every circumstance of which was pre-arranged, as I now believe, with the profoundest cunning, as liable to be modified by accident.

“‘As to that,’ she began; but she was interrupted, almost as she opened her lips, by a gentleman, dressed in black, who looked particularly elegant and distinguished, with this drawback, that his face was the most deadly pale I ever saw, except in death. He was in no masquerade—in the plain evening dress of a gentleman; and he said, without a smile, but with a courtly and unusually low bow:—

“‘Will Madame the Countess permit me to say a very few words which may interest her?’

“‘The lady turned quickly to him, and touched her lip in token of silence; she then said to me, ‘Keep my place for me, General; I shall return when I have said a few words.’

“‘And with this injunction, playfully given, she walked a little aside with the gentleman in black, and talked for some minutes, apparently

very earnestly. They then walked away slowly together in the crowd, and I lost them for some minutes.

“I spent the interval in cudgelling my brains for a conjecture as to the identity of the lady who seemed to remember me so kindly, and I was thinking of turning about and joining in the conversation between my pretty ward and the Countess’s daughter, and trying whether, by the time she returned, I might not have a surprise in store for her, by having her name, title, chateau, and estates at my fingers’ ends. But at this moment she returned, accompanied by the pale man in black, who said:

“‘I shall return and inform Madame la Comtesse when her carriage is at the door.’

“He withdrew with a bow.

XII

A Petition

“Then we are to lose Madame the Countess, but I hope only for a few hours,’ I said, with a low bow.

“It may be that only, or it may be a few weeks. It was very unlucky his speaking to me just now as he did. Do you now know me?’

“I assured her I did not.

“You shall know me,’ she said, ‘but not at present. We are older and better friends than, perhaps, you suspect. I cannot yet declare myself. I shall in three weeks pass your beautiful schloss, about which I have been making enquiries. I shall then look in upon you for an hour or two, and renew a friendship which I never think of without a thousand pleasant recollections. This moment a piece of news has reached me like a thunderbolt. I must set out now, and travel by a devious route, nearly a hundred miles, with all the dispatch I can possibly make. My perplexities multiply. I am only deterred by the compulsory reserve I practise as to my name from making a very singular request of you. My poor child has not quite recovered her strength. Her horse fell with her, at a hunt which she had ridden out to witness, her nerves have not yet recovered the shock, and our physician says that she must on no account exert herself for some time to come. We came here, in consequence, by very easy stages—hardly six leagues a day. I must now travel day and night, on a mission of life and death—a mission the critical and momentous nature of which I shall be able to explain to you when we meet, as I hope we shall, in a few weeks, without the necessity of any concealment.’

“She went on to make her petition, and it was in the tone of a person from whom such a request amounted to conferring, rather than seeking a favor. This was only in manner, and, as it seemed, quite unconsciously. Than the terms in which it was expressed, nothing could be more deprecatory. It was simply that I would consent to take charge of her daughter during her absence.

“This was, all things considered, a strange, not to say, an audacious request. She in some sort disarmed me, by stating and admitting everything that could be urged against it, and throwing herself entirely upon my chivalry. At the same moment, by a fatality that seems to have predetermined all that happened, my poor child came to my side, and, in an undertone, besought me to invite her new friend, Millarca, to pay us a visit. She had just been sounding her, and thought, if her mamma would allow her, she would like it extremely.

“At another time I should have told her to wait a little, until at least, we knew who they were. But I had not a moment to think in. The two ladies assailed me together, and I must confess the refined and beautiful face of the young lady, about which there was something extremely engaging, as well as the elegance and fire of high birth, determined me; and, quite overpowered, I submitted, and undertook, too easily, the care of the young lady, whom her mother called Millarca.

“The Countess beckoned to her daughter, who listened with grave attention while she told her, in general terms, how suddenly and peremptorily she had been summoned, and also of the arrangement she had made for her under my care, adding that I was one of her earliest and most valued friends.

“I made, of course, such speeches as the case seemed to call for, and found myself, on reflection, in a position which I did not half like.

“The gentleman in black returned, and very ceremoniously conducted the lady from the room.

“The demeanour of this gentleman was such as to impress me with the conviction that the Countess was a lady of very much more importance than her modest title alone might have led me to assume.

“Her last charge to me was that no attempt was to be made to learn more about her than I might have already guessed, until her

return. Our distinguished host, whose guest she was, knew her reasons. ‘But here,’ she said, ‘neither I nor my daughter could safely remain for more than a day. I removed my mask imprudently for a moment, about an hour ago, and, too late, I fancied you saw me. So I resolved to seek an opportunity of talking a little to you. Had I found that you *had* seen me, I should have thrown myself on your high sense of honour to keep my secret for some weeks. As it is, I am satisfied that you did not see me; but if you now *suspect*, or, on reflection, *should* suspect, who I am, I commit myself, in like manner, entirely to your honour. My daughter will observe the same secresy, and I well know that you will, from time to time, remind her, lest she should thoughtlessly disclose it.’

“She whispered a few words to her daughter, kissed her hurriedly twice, and went away, accompanied by the pale gentleman in black, and disappeared in the crowd.”

“‘In the next room,’ said Millarca, ‘there is a window that looks upon the hall-door. I should like to see the last of mamma, and to kiss my hand to her.’

“We assented, of course, and accompanied her to the window. We looked out, and saw a handsome old-fashioned carriage, with a troop of couriers and footmen. We saw the slim figure of the pale gentleman in black, as he held a thick velvet cloak, and placed it about her shoulders and threw the hood over her head. She nodded to him, and just touched his hand with hers. He bowed low repeatedly as the door closed, and the carriage began to move.

“‘She is gone,’ said Millarca, with a sigh.

“‘She is gone,’ I repeated to myself, for the first time—in the hurried moments that had elapsed since my consent—reflecting upon the folly of my act.

“‘She did not look up,’ said the young lady, plaintively.

“‘The Countess had taken off her mask, perhaps, and did not care to show her face,’ I said; ‘and she could not know that you were in the window.’

“She sighed, and looked in my face. She was so beautiful that I relented. I was sorry I had for a moment repented of my hospitality,

and I determined to make her amends for the unavowed churlishness of my reception.

“The young lady, replacing her mask, joined my ward in persuading me to return to the grounds, where the concert was soon to be renewed. We did so, and walked up and down the terrace that lies under the castle windows. Millarca became very intimate with us, and amused us with lively descriptions and stories of most of the great people whom we saw upon the terrace. I liked her more and more every minute. Her gossip, without being ill-natured, was extremely diverting to me, who had been so long out of the great world. I thought what life she would give to our sometimes lonely evenings at home.

“This ball was not over until the morning sun had almost reached the horizon. It pleased the Grand Duke to dance till then, so loyal people could not go away, or think of bed.

“We had just got through a crowded saloon,¹ when my ward asked me what had become of Millarca. I thought she had been by her side, and she fancied she was by mine. The fact was, we had lost her.

“All my efforts to find her were vain. I feared that she had mistaken, in the confusion of a momentary separation from us, other people for her new friends, and had, possibly, pursued and lost them in the extensive grounds which were thrown open to us.

“Now, in its full force, I recognised a new folly in my having undertaken the charge of a young lady without so much as knowing her name; and fettered as I was by promises, of the reasons for imposing which I knew nothing, I could not even point my inquiries² by saying that the missing young lady was the daughter of the Countess who had taken her departure a few hours before.

“Morning broke. It was clear daylight before I gave up my search. It was not till near two o’clock next day that we heard anything of my missing charge.

1. Alternate spelling of *salon*; a room for hosting guests.

2. This is the only time this word is spelled *inquiries* instead of *enquiries*, another textual inconsistency possibly reflective of the text being written serially.

“At about that time a servant knocked at my niece’s door, to say that he had been earnestly requested by a young lady, who appeared to be in great distress, to make out where she could find the General Baron Spielsdorf and the young lady his daughter, in whose charge she had been left by her mother.

“There could be no doubt, notwithstanding the slight inaccuracy, that our young friend had turned up; and so she had. Would to heaven we had lost her!

“She told my poor child a story to account for her having failed to recover us for so long. Very late, she said, she had got to the house-keeper’s bedroom in despair of finding us, and had then fallen into a deep sleep which, long as it was, had hardly sufficed to recruit her strength after the fatigues of the ball.

“That day Millarca came home with us. I was only too happy, after all, to have secured so charming a companion for my dear girl.

XIII

The Wood-Man

“There soon, however, appeared some drawbacks. In the first place, Millarca complained of extreme languor—the weakness that remained after her late illness—and she never emerged from her room till the afternoon was pretty far advanced. In the next place, it was accidentally discovered, although she always locked her door on the inside, and never disturbed the key from its place till she admitted the maid to assist at her toilet,¹ that she was undoubtedly sometimes absent from her room in the very early morning, and at various times later in the day, before she wished it to be understood that she was stirring. She was repeatedly seen from the windows of the schloss, in the first faint grey of the morning, walking through the trees, in an easterly direction, and looking like a person in a trance. This convinced me that she walked in her sleep. But this hypothesis did not solve the puzzle. How did she pass out from her room, leaving the door locked on the inside? How did she escape from the house without unbarring door or window?

“In the midst of my perplexities, an anxiety of a far more urgent kind presented itself.

“My dear child began to lose her looks and health, and that in a manner so mysterious, and even horrible, that I became thoroughly frightened.

3. Daily ablutions; a person's morning rituals and preparations to be presentable in public.

“She was at first visited by appalling dreams; then, as she fancied, by a spectre, sometimes resembling Millarca, sometimes in the shape of a beast, indistinctly seen, walking round the foot of her bed, from side to side. Lastly came sensations. One, not unpleasant, but very peculiar, she said, resembled the flow of an icy stream against her breast. At a later time, she felt something like a pair of large needles pierce her, a little below the throat, with a very sharp pain. A few nights after, followed a gradual and convulsive sense of strangulation; then came unconsciousness.”

I could hear distinctly every word the kind old General was saying, because by this time we were driving upon the short grass that spreads on either side of the road as you approach the roofless village which had not shown the smoke of a chimney for more than half a century.

You may guess how strangely I felt as I heard my own symptoms so exactly described in those which had been experienced by the poor girl who, but for the catastrophe which followed, would have been at that moment a visitor at my father’s chateau. You may suppose, also, how I felt as I heard him detail habits and mysterious peculiarities which were, in fact, those of our beautiful guest, Carmilla!

A vista opened in the forest; we were on a sudden under the chimneys and gables of the ruined village, and the towers and battlements of the dismantled castle, round which gigantic trees are grouped, overhung us from a slight eminence.

In a frightened dream I got down from the carriage, and in silence, for we had each abundant matter for thinking; we soon mounted the ascent, and were among the spacious chambers, winding stairs, and dark corridors of the castle.

“And this was once the palatial residence of the Karnsteins!” said the old General at length, as from a great window he looked out across the village, and saw the wide, undulating expanse of forest. “It was a bad family, and here its blood-stained annals were written,” he continued. “It is hard that they should, after death, continue to plague the human race with their atrocious lusts. That is the chapel of the Karnsteins, down there.”

He pointed down to the grey walls of the gothic building, partly visible through the foliage, a little way down the steep. "And I hear the axe of a woodman," he added, "busy among the trees that surround it; he possibly may give us the information of which I am in search, and point out the grave of Mircalla, Countess of Karnstein. These rustics preserve the local traditions of great families, whose stories die out among the rich and titled so soon as the families themselves become extinct."

"We have a portrait, at home, of Mircalla, the Countess Karnstein; should you like to see it?" asked my father.

"Time enough, dear friend," replied the General. "I believe that I have seen the original; and one motive which has led me to you earlier than I at first intended, was to explore the chapel which we are now approaching."

"What! See the Countess Mircalla," exclaimed my father; "why, she has been dead more than a century!"

"Not so dead as you fancy, I am told," answered the General.

"I confess, General, you puzzle me utterly," replied my father, looking at him, I fancied, for a moment with a return of the suspicion I detected before. But although there was anger and detestation, at times, in the old General's manner, there was nothing flighty.

"There remains to me," he said, as we passed under the heavy arch of the gothic church—for its dimensions would have justified its being so styled—"but one object which can interest me during the few years that remain to me on earth, and that is to wreak on her the vengeance which, I thank God, may still be accomplished by a mortal arm."

"What vengeance can you mean?" asked my father, in increasing amazement.

"I mean, to decapitate the monster," he answered, with a fierce flush, and a stamp that echoed mournfully through the hollow ruin, and his clenched hand was at the same moment raised, as if it grasped the handle of an axe, while he shook it ferociously in the air.

"What?" exclaimed my father, more than ever bewildered.

"To strike her head off."

"Cut her head off!"

“Aye, with a hatchet, with a spade, or with anything that can cleave through her murderous throat. You shall hear,” he answered, trembling with rage. And hurrying forward he said:

“That beam will answer for a seat; your dear child is fatigued; let her be seated, and I will, in a few sentences, close my dreadful story.”

The squared block of wood, which lay on the grass grown pavement of the chapel, formed a bench on which I was very glad to seat myself, and in the meantime the General called to the woodman, who had been removing some boughs which leaned upon the old walls; and, axe in hand, the hardy old fellow stood before us.

He could not tell us anything of these monuments; but there was an old man, he said, a ranger of this forest, at present sojourning in the house of the priest, about two miles away, who could point out every monument of the old Karnstein family; and, for a trifle, he undertook to bring him back with him, if we would lend him one of our horses, in little more than half an hour.

“Have you been long employed about this forest?” asked my father of the old man.

“I have been a woodman here,” he answered in his *patois*,² “under the forester, all my days; so has my father before me, and so on, as many generations as I can count up. I could show you the very house, in the village here, in which my ancestors lived.”

“How came the village to be deserted?” asked the General.

“It was troubled by *revenants*,³ Sir; several were tracked to their graves, there detected by the usual tests, and extinguished in the usual way, by decapitation, by the stake, and by burning; but not until many of the villagers were killed.

“But after all these proceedings according to law,” he continued—“so many graves opened, and so many vampires deprived of their horrible animation—the village was not relieved. But a Moravian⁴

1. A regional dialect.

2. People who return from the dead; ghosts.

3. Moravia is a region in the current-day Czech Republic that borders Slovakia and Austria.

nobleman, who happened to be travelling this way, heard how matters were, and being skilled—as many people are in his country—in such affairs, he offered to deliver the village from its tormentor. He did so thus: There being a bright moon that night, he ascended, shortly after sunset, the towers of the chapel here, from whence he could distinctly see the churchyard beneath him; you can see it from that window. From this point he watched until he saw the vampire come out of his grave, and place near it the linen clothes in which he had been folded, and then glide away towards the village to plague its inhabitants.

“The stranger, having seen all this, came down from the steeple, took the linen wrappings of the vampire, and carried them up to the top of the tower, which he again mounted. When the vampire returned from his prowlings and missed his clothes, he cried furiously to the Moravian, whom he saw at the summit of the tower, and who, in reply, beckoned him to ascend and take them. Whereupon the vampire, accepting his invitation, began to climb the steeple, and so soon as he had reached the battlements, the Moravian, with a stroke of his sword, clove his skull in twain, hurling him down to the churchyard, whither, descending by the winding stairs, the stranger followed and cut his head off, and next day delivered it and the body to the villagers, who duly impaled and burnt them.

“This Moravian nobleman had authority from the then head of the family to remove the tomb of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein, which he did effectually, so that in a little while its site was quite forgotten.”

“Can you point out where it stood?” asked the General, eagerly.

The forester shook his head and smiled.

“Not a soul living could tell you that now,” he said; “besides, they say her body was removed; but no one is sure of that either.”

Having thus spoken, as time pressed, he dropped his axe and departed, leaving us to hear the remainder of the General’s strange story.

XIV

The Meeting

“My beloved child,” he resumed, “was now growing rapidly worse. The physician who attended her had failed to produce the slightest impression upon her disease, for such I then supposed it to be. He saw my alarm, and suggested a consultation. I called in an abler physician, from Gratz. Several days elapsed before he arrived. He was a good and pious, as well as a learned man. Having seen my poor ward together, they withdrew to my library to confer and discuss. I, from the adjoining room, where I awaited their summons, heard these two gentlemen’s voices raised in something sharper than a strictly philosophical discussion. I knocked at the door and entered. I found the old physician from Gratz maintaining his theory. His rival was combatting it with undisguised ridicule, accompanied with bursts of laughter. This unseemly manifestation subsided and the altercation ended on my entrance.

“‘Sir,’ said my first physician, ‘my learned brother seems to think that you want a conjuror, and not a doctor.’

“‘Pardon me,’ said the old physician from Gratz, looking displeased, ‘I shall state my own view of the case in my own way another time. I grieve, Monsieur le General, that by my skill and science I can be of no use. Before I go I shall do myself the honour to suggest something to you.’

“He seemed thoughtful, and sat down at a table and began to write. Profoundly disappointed, I made my bow, and as I turned to go the other doctor pointed over his shoulder to his companion who was writing, and then, with a shrug, significantly touched his forehead.

“This consultation, then, left me precisely where I was. I walked out into the grounds, all but distracted. The doctor from Gratz, in ten or fifteen minutes, overtook me. He apologised for having followed me, but said that he could not conscientiously take his leave without a few words more. He told me that he could not be mistaken; no natural disease exhibited the same symptoms; and that death was already very near. There remained, however, a day, or possibly two, of life. If the fatal seizure were at once arrested, with great care and skill her strength might possibly return. But all hung now upon the confines of the irrevocable. One more assault might extinguish the last spark of vitality which is, every moment, ready to die.

“‘And what is the nature of the seizure you speak of?’ I entreated.

“‘I have stated all fully in this note, which I place in your hands upon the distinct condition that you send for the nearest clergyman, and open my letter in his presence, and on no account read it till he is with you; you would despise it else, and it is a matter of life and death. Should the priest fail you, then, indeed, you may read it.’

“He asked me, before taking his leave finally, whether I would wish to see a man curiously learned upon the very subject, which, after I had read his letter, would probably interest me above all others, and he urged me earnestly to invite him to visit him there; and so took his leave.

“The ecclesiastic was absent, and I read the letter by myself. At another time, or in another case, it might have excited my ridicule. But into what quackeries will not people rush for a last chance, where all accustomed means have failed, and the life of a beloved object is at stake?

“Nothing, you will say, could be more absurd than the learned man’s letter. It was monstrous enough to have consigned him to a madhouse. He said that the patient was suffering from the visits of a vampire! The punctures which she described as having occurred near the throat, were, he insisted, the insertion of those two long, thin, and sharp teeth which, it is well known, are peculiar to vampires; and there could be no doubt, he added, as to the well-defined presence of the small livid mark which all concurred in describing as that induced



3. Engraving of “*Carmilla*,” drawn by D. H. Friston, engraved by C. M. Jenkin. From *The Dark Blue*, Mar. 1872. Courtesy of the Special Collections/Research Center, Syracuse University Library.

by the demon’s lips, and every symptom described by the sufferer was in exact conformity with those recorded in every case of a similar visitation.

“Being myself wholly sceptical as to the existence of any such portent as the vampire, the supernatural theory of the good doctor furnished, in my opinion, but another instance of learning and intelligence oddly associated with some one hallucination. I was so miserable, however, that, rather than try nothing, I acted upon the instructions of the letter.

“I concealed myself in the dark dressing-room, that opened upon the poor patient’s room, in which a candle was burning, and watched there till she was fast asleep. I stood at the door, peeping through the small crevice, my sword laid on the table beside me, as my directions prescribed, until, a little after one, I saw a large black object, very

ill-defined, crawl, as it seemed to me, over the foot of the bed, and swiftly spread itself up to the poor girl's throat, where it swelled, in a moment, into a great, palpitating mass. For a few moments I had stood petrified. I now sprang forward, with my sword in my hand. The black creature suddenly contracted toward the foot of the bed, glided over it, and, standing on the floor about a yard below the foot of the bed, with a glare of skulking ferocity and horror fixed on me, I saw Millarca. Speculating I know not what, I struck at her instantly with my sword; but I saw her standing near the door, unscathed. Horrified, I pursued, and struck again. She was gone; and my sword flew to shivers against the door.

"I can't describe to you all that passed on that horrible night. The whole house was up and stirring. The spectre Millarca was gone. But her victim was sinking fast, and before the morning dawned, she died."

The old General was agitated. We did not speak to him. My father walked to some little distance, and began reading the inscriptions on the tombstones; and thus occupied, he strolled into the door of a side-chapel to prosecute his researches. The General leaned against the wall, dried his eyes, and sighed heavily. I was relieved on hearing the voices of Carmilla and Madame, who were at that moment approaching. The voices died away.

In this solitude, having just listened to so strange a story, connected, as it was, with the great and titled dead, whose monuments were mouldering among the dust and ivy round us, and every incident of which bore so awfully upon my own mysterious case—in this haunted spot, darkened by the towering foliage that rose on every side, dense and high above its noiseless walls—a horror began to steal over me, and my heart sank as I thought that my friends were, after all, not about to enter and disturb this triste¹ and ominous scene.

The old General's eyes were fixed on the ground, as he leaned with his hand upon the basement of a shattered monument.

1. Sad.

Under a narrow, arched doorway, surmounted by one of those demoniacal grotesques in which the cynical and ghastly fancy of old Gothic carving delights, I saw very gladly the beautiful face and figure of Carmilla enter the shadowy chapel.

I was just about to rise and speak, and nodded smiling, in answer to her peculiarly engaging smile; when with a cry, the old man by my side caught up the woodman's hatchet, and started forward. On seeing him a brutalised change came over her features. It was an instantaneous and horrible transformation, as she made a crouching step backwards. Before I could utter a scream, he struck at her with all his force, but she dived under his blow, and unscathed, caught him in her tiny grasp by the wrist. He struggled for a moment to release his arm, but his hand opened, the axe fell to the ground, and the girl was gone.

He staggered against the wall. His grey hair stood upon his head, and a moisture shone over his face, as if he were at the point of death.

The frightful scene had passed in a moment. The first thing I recollect after, is Madame standing before me, and impatiently repeating again and again, the question, "Where is Mademoiselle Carmilla?"

I answered at length, "I don't know—I can't tell—she went there," and I pointed to the door through which Madame had just entered; "only a minute or two since."

"But I have been standing there, in the passage, ever since Mademoiselle Carmilla entered; and she did not return."

She then began to call "Carmilla," through every door and passage and from the windows, but no answer came.

"She called herself Carmilla?" asked the General, still agitated.

"Carmilla, yes," I answered.

"Aye," he said; "that is Millarca. That is the same person who long ago was called Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. Depart from this accursed ground, my poor child, as quickly as you can. Drive to the clergyman's house, and stay there till we come. Begone! May you never behold Carmilla more; you will not find her here."

XV

Ordeal and Execution

As he spoke one of the strangest looking men I ever beheld, entered the chapel at the door through which Carmilla had made her entrance and her exit. He was tall, narrow-chested, stooping, with high shoulders, and dressed in black. His face was brown and dried in with deep furrows; he wore an oddly-shaped hat with a broad leaf. His hair, long and grizzled, hung on his shoulders. He wore a pair of gold spectacles, and walked slowly, with an odd shambling gait, with his face sometimes turned up to the sky, and sometimes bowed down toward the ground, seemed to wear a perpetual smile; his long thin arms were swinging, and his lank hands, in old black gloves ever so much too wide for them, waving and gesticulating in utter abstraction.

“The very man!” exclaimed the General, advancing with manifest delight. “My dear Baron, how happy I am to see you, I had no hope of meeting you so soon.” He signed to my father, who had by this time returned, and leading the fantastic old gentleman, whom he called the Baron to meet him. He introduced him formally, and they at once entered into earnest conversation. The stranger took a roll of paper from his pocket, and spread it on the worn surface of a tomb that stood by. He had a pencil-case in his fingers, with which he traced imaginary lines from point to point on the paper, which from their often glancing from it, together, at certain points of the building, I concluded to be a plan of the chapel. He accompanied, what I may term, his lecture, with occasional readings from a dirty little book, whose yellow leaves were closely written over.

They sauntered together down the side aisle, opposite to the spot where I was standing, conversing as they went; then they begun¹ measuring distances by paces, and finally they all stood together, facing a piece of the side-wall, which they began to examine with great minuteness; pulling off the ivy that clung over it, and rapping the plaster with the ends of their sticks, scraping here, and knocking there. At length they ascertained the existence of a broad marble tablet, with letters carved in relief upon it.

With the assistance of the woodman, who returned, a monumental inscription, and carved escutcheon, were disclosed. They proved to be those of the long lost monument of Mircalla, Countess Karnstein.

The old General, though not I fear given to the praying mood, raised his hands and eyes to heaven, in mute thanksgiving for some moments.

“To-morrow,” I heard him say; “the commissioner will be here, and the Inquisition will be held according to law.”

Then turning to the old man with the gold spectacles, whom I have described, he shook him warmly by both hands and said:

“Baron, how can I thank you? How can we all thank you? You will have delivered this region from a plague that has scourged its inhabitants for more than a century. The horrible enemy, thank God, is at last tracked.”

My father led the stranger aside, and the General followed. I knew that he had led them out of hearing, that he might relate my case, and I saw them glance often quickly at me, as the discussion proceeded.

My father came to me, kissed me again and again, and leading me from the chapel, said:

“It is time to return, but before we go home, we must add to our party the good priest, who lives but a little way from this; and persuade him to accompany us to the schloss.”

In this quest we were successful: and I was glad, being unspeakably fatigued when we reached home. But my satisfaction was changed

1. An erroneous usage of the verb instead of “began.”

to dismay, on discovering that there were no tidings of Carmilla. Of the scene that had occurred in the ruined chapel, no explanation was offered to me, and it was clear that it was a secret which my father for the present determined to keep from me.

The sinister absence of Carmilla made the remembrance of the scene more horrible to me. The arrangements for that night were singular. Two servants, and Madame were to sit up in my room that night; and the ecclesiastic with my father kept watch in the adjoining dressing-room.

The priest had performed certain solemn rites that night, the purport of which I did not understand any more than I comprehended the reason of this extraordinary precaution taken for my safety during sleep.

I saw all clearly a few days later.

The disappearance of Carmilla was followed by the discontinuance of my nightly sufferings.

You have heard, no doubt, of the appalling superstition that prevails in Upper and Lower Styria,² in Moravia, Silisia, in Turkish Serbia, in Poland, even in Russia; the superstition, so we must call it, of the Vampire.

If human testimony, taken with every care and solemnity, judicially, before commissions innumerable, each consisting of many members, all chosen for integrity and intelligence, and constituting reports more voluminous perhaps than exist upon any one other class of cases, is worth anything, it is difficult to deny, or even to doubt the existence of such a phenomenon as the Vampire.

For my part I heard no theory by which to explain what I myself have witnessed and experienced, other than that supplied by the ancient and well-attested belief of the country.

The next day the formal proceedings took place in the Chapel of Karnstein. The grave of the Countess Mircalla was opened; and the

2. "Upper" and "Lower" capitalized as part of proper regional names in *In a Glass Darkly*.

General and my father recognised each his perfidious and beautiful guest, in the face now disclosed to view. The features, though a hundred and fifty years had passed since her funeral, were tinted with the warmth of life. Her eyes were open; no cadaverous smell exhaled from the coffin. The two medical men, one officially present, the other on the part of the promoter of the enquiry, attested the marvellous fact, that there was a faint but appreciable respiration, and a corresponding action of the heart. The limbs were perfectly flexible, the flesh elastic; and the leaden coffin floated with blood, in which to a depth of seven inches, the body lay immersed. Here then, were all the admitted signs and proofs of vampirism. The body, therefore, in accordance with the ancient practice, was raised, and a sharp stake driven through the heart of the vampire, who uttered a piercing shriek at the moment, in all respects such as might escape from a living person in the last agony. Then the head was struck off, and a torrent of blood flowed from the severed neck. The body and head were next placed on a pile of wood, and reduced to ashes, which were thrown upon the river and borne away, and that territory has never since been plagued by the visits of a vampire.

My father has a copy of the report of the Imperial Commission, with the signatures of all who were present at these proceedings, attached in verification of the statement. It is from this official paper that I have summarized my account of this last shocking scene.

XVI

Conclusion

I write all this you suppose with composure. But far from it; I cannot think of it without agitation. Nothing but your earnest desire so repeatedly expressed, could have induced me to sit down to a task that has unstrung my nerves for months to come, and reinduced a shadow of the unspeakable horror which years after my deliverance continued to make my days and nights dreadful, and solitude insupportably terrific.

Let me add a word of two about that quaint Baron Vordenburg, to whose curious lore we were indebted for the discovery of the Countess Mircalla's grave.

He had taken up his abode in Gratz, where, living upon a mere pittance, which was all that remained to him of the once princely estates of his family, in Upper Styria, he devoted himself to the minute and laborious investigation of the marvellously authenticated tradition of Vampirism. He had at his fingers¹ ends all the great and little works upon the subject. "Magia Posthuma," "Phlegon de Mirabilibus," "Augustinus de curâ pro Mortuis," "Philosophicae et Christianae Cogitationes de Vampiris," by John Christofer Herenberg;² and a thousand others, among which I remember only a few of those which he lent to my father. He had a voluminous digest of all the judicial

1. Changed from singular possessive to plural possessive in *In a Glass Darkly*.

2. Apparently fictional titles created by Le Fanu to give the ring of scientific validity to Baron Vordenburg's research and knowledge.

cases, from which he had extracted a system of principles that appear to govern—some always, and others occasionally only—the condition of the vampire. I may mention, in passing, that the deadly pallor attributed to that sort of *revenants*, is a mere melodramatic fiction. They present, in the grave, and when they show themselves in human society, the appearance of healthy life. When disclosed to light in their coffins, they exhibit all the symptoms that are enumerated as those which proved the vampire-life of the long-dead Countess Karnstein. How they escape from their graves and return to them for certain hours every day, without displacing the clay or leaving any trace of disturbance in the state of the coffin or the cerements, has always been admitted to be utterly inexplicable. The amphibious existence of the vampire is sustained by daily renewed slumber in the grave. Its horrible lust for living blood supplies the vigour of its waking existence. The vampire is prone to be fascinated with an engrossing vehemence, resembling the passion of love, by particular persons. In pursuit of these it will exercise inexhaustible patience and stratagem, for access to a particular object may be obstructed in a hundred ways. It will never desist until it has satiated its passion, and drained the very life of its coveted victim. But it will, in these cases, husband and protract its murderous enjoyment with the refinement of an epicure, and heighten it by the gradual approaches of an artful courtship. In these cases it seems to yearn for something like sympathy and consent. In ordinary ones it goes direct to its object, overpowers with violence, and strangles and exhausts often at a single feast.

The vampire is, apparently, subject, in certain situations, to special conditions. In the particular instance of which I have given you a relation, Mircalla seemed to be limited to a name which, if not her real one, should at least reproduce, without the omission or addition of a single letter, those, as we say, anagrammatically, which compose it. *Carmilla* did this; so did *Millarca*.

My father related to the Baron Vordenburg, who remained with us for two or three weeks after the expulsion of Carmilla, the story about the Moravian nobleman and the vampire at Karnstein churchyard, and then he asked the Baron how he had discovered the exact position of

the long-concealed tomb of the Countess Millarca? The Baron's grotesque features puckered up into a mysterious smile; he looked down, still smiling on his worn spectacle-case, and fumbled with it. Then looking up, he said:

"I have many journals, and other papers, written by that remarkable man; the most curious among them is one treating of the visit of which you speak, to Karnstein. The tradition, of course, discolours and distorts a little. He might have been termed a Moravian nobleman, for he had changed his abode to that territory, and was, beside, a noble. But he was, in truth, a native of Upper Styria. It is enough to say that in very early youth he had been a passionate and favoured lover of the beautiful Mircalla, Countess Karnstein. Her early death plunged him into inconsolable grief. It is the nature of vampires to increase and multiply, but according to an ascertained and ghostly law.

"Assume, at starting, a territory perfectly free from that pest. How does it begin, and how does it multiply itself? I will tell you. A person, more or less wicked, puts an end to himself. A suicide, under certain circumstances, becomes a vampire. That spectre visits living people in their slumbers; *they* die, and almost invariably, in the grave, develop³ into vampires. This happened in the case of the beautiful Mircalla, who was haunted by one of those demons. My ancestor, Vordenburg, whose title I still bear, soon discovered this, and in the course of the studies to which he devoted himself, learned a great deal more.

"Among other things, he concluded that suspicion of vampirism would probably fall, sooner or later, upon the dead Countess, who in life had been his idol. He conceived a horror, be she what she might, of her remains being profaned by the outrage of a posthumous execution. He has left a curious paper to prove that the vampire, on its expulsion from its amphibious existence, is projected into a far more horrible life; and he resolved to save his once beloved Mircalla from this. He adopted the stratagem of a journey here, a pretended removal of her remains, and a real obliteration of her monument. When age

3. An older, alternate spelling for "develop" (see *OED*).

had stolen upon him, and from the vale of years he looked back on the scenes he was leaving, he considered, in a different spirit, what he had done, and a horror took possession of him. He made the tracings and notes which have guided me to the very spot, and drew up a confession of the deception that he had practised. If he had intended any further action in this matter, death prevented him; and the hand of a remote descendant has, too late for many, directed the pursuit to the lair of the beast.”

We talked a little more, and among other things he said was this:

“One sign of the vampire is the power of the hand. The slender hand of Mircalla closed like a vice of steel on the General’s wrist when he raised the hatchet to strike. But its power is not confined to its grasp; it leaves a numbness in the limb it seizes, which is slowly, if ever, recovered from.”

The following spring my father took me a tour⁴ through Italy. We remained away for more than a year. It was long before the terror of recent events subsided; and to this hour the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations—sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl; sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church; and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door.

4. This construction, which today would be “on a tour,” is maintained in both the serialized and the later anthologized versions of the text.

P A R T T W O



An Irish *Carmilla*?

JARLATH KILLEEN

It is best to be straight from the very beginning: Ireland is never mentioned in Sheridan Le Fanu's *Carmilla* (1871). To argue that the story, although set in eastern Europe, is "really about" Ireland initially appears improbable. This improbability has not, however, dissuaded some of my more intrepid forerunners, most important Robert Tracy, who straightforwardly insists that "*Carmilla* is set in Styria, but it is nevertheless a story about Anglo-Irish anxiety" (1999, 22).¹ It is not unusual, of course, to find critics insisting that gothic narratives are heavily coded ways for social, cultural, political, and religious "anxieties" to be explored in a safe fashion (Punter 1996 is the classic example of this approach), and when dealing with vampires, gothic criticism has a readily available decoder because we all know by now (don't we?) that vampires are really a way to speak about transgressive sexuality (see Twitchell 1988, 105–59). *Carmilla* is typically read as a tale of lesbian desire—literally unspeakable in 1871, but, when articulated in oblique form, meat enough for the best vampire story before *Dracula* (1897). Depending on where you sit, *Carmilla* either expresses a hysterical fear of sexually and domestically powerful women or operates as

1. One critic has been bold enough to reclaim the story for eastern Europe and sees in the story a means by which Le Fanu comments on the "Eastern Question" (Gibson 2006, 42–68), but, if anything, this view seems even more improbable.

a sympathetic study of women stereotyped as dangerous by Victorian culture. Carmilla the Victorian “vamp” is by now a well-recognized figure in gothic criticism (on *Carmilla* and sexuality, see Veeder 1980; Dyer 1988; Signorotti 1996).

Sex, yes; Ireland, no? That vampires could be used to speak about Ireland initially might appear unlikely, but for a nineteenth-century British reader, vampirism and Ireland were related and analogous sites of infection and terror.² In *The Tomahawk*, August 7, 1869, an illustration entitled *The Irish Vampire! Brought to Life by the Moonbeam* directly associated Irish Catholic nationalist agrarian insurgency with vampirism, an association echoed in the depiction of the leader of the Irish Parliamentary Party and agitator for Irish Home Rule Charles Stewart Parnell (1846–91) as a vampire preying on the prostrate figure of Hibernia in the October 24, 1885, edition of *Punch* (for these examples, see Gibbons 2004, 81, 82). Sandwiched between these dates, an Irish Carmilla suddenly seems rather less bizarre, especially since Sheridan Le Fanu himself was hardly averse to commenting and writing on Irish affairs—sometimes resorting to the paraphernalia of the gothic, sometimes monsterring Irish Catholics when doing so. A good example is his discussion of the Catholic “Liberator” Daniel O’Connell (1775–1846), the Irish politician who campaigned for Catholic emancipation and repeal of the Act of Union in a speech given at Conservative House in October 1840:

Mr. O’Connell has been, throughout his whole political career, the sworn exterminator of Protestantism. . . . [He has] achieved his own political elevation at a sacrifice of human life, greater than any mortal pestilence has caused, and at an expense of human crime which must be slowly paid for [by] ages of national degradation—and one

2. I should note here, of course, that in some corners of the vampire-loving globe, this connection between the Irish and vampires can be seen even now: hence, the title character of the television series *Angel* (1999–2004) apparently hails from Dublin, and, of course, the currently famous vampire family in Stephenie Meyers’s series goes by the Irish name “Cullen.”

who, having seen the victims of his hatred laid in the graves of martyrdom, and those of his perfidy and cajolery exposed upon the gibbets of their country, now approaches the verge of his iniquitous existence, unaffected by the visitings of remorse, with a soul in which every passion, but that of unquenchable malignity had perished, and a heart which so far from being touched by the awful approaches of death and judgement, seems not to anticipate the coldness and corruption of the grave. (quoted in McCormack 1997, 84)

As Terry Eagleton notes about this passage, “O’Connell is for Le Fanu, a figure straight out of Transylvanian folklore, a kind of Dracula of Derrynane” (1995, 189)—although, to turn this analogy somewhat, *Carmilla* may be an O’Connell in drag.

In this historical and biographical context, the Irishing of *Carmilla* in the critical writing has been irresistible, for which the heroine’s “hyphenated” nationality has acted the bellwether. Laura is the daughter of a Styrian mother and an English father who appears obsessed with maintaining an English identity in a foreign land—through tea drinking, Shakespeare reading, English speaking, and a general attitude that configures England as “home” (p. 4). Because the family is Anglo-Styrian, it has proved impossible not to read it as in some way a reflection on the “Anglo-Irish,” the class to which Le Fanu belonged. This is especially true given the by now orthodox reading of Le Fanu as a (the?) central figure in an “Irish gothic tradition” made up primarily of Irish Protestants who, according to Roy Foster, turned to the gothic genre in order to articulate their feeling of increasing marginalization as the nineteenth century progressed and more and more power was transferred to Irish Catholics.³ Foster argues that Irish Protestants felt isolated and neglected in this

3. “Irish gothic” is very difficult to define, but for the purposes of this essay the category includes anything produced by Irish writers who pursued certain similar questions that were historically specific to the Irish situation and in doing so utilized the gothic mode. The “Irishness” of the tradition comes from the fact that the writers had some important Irish connection, dealt with Irish issues, and were partially

new Ireland, and their “occult preoccupations surely mirror a sense of displacement, a loss of social and psychological integration, and an escapism motivated by the threat of a takeover by the Catholic middle classes” (1995, 220; see also Tracy 1993, xx). Thus, for Margot Backus, “Laura’s girlhood in Styria closely resembles the enclosed and isolated childhood of an Anglo-Irish girl. Her family resembles an Anglo-Irish family in its internal dynamics, its ambivalent relationship to the culture that surrounds it, and its economic *raison d’être*. . . . [The family is] a *reductio ad absurdum* of the Anglo-Irish settler colonial order” (1999, 127–28). The isolation, sense of abandonment, desire to retain English ethnicity and English identity—all echo (mirror?) the kinds of cultural practices engaged in by the Victorian Anglo-Irish.

This reading needs to be complicated, however, by the fact that by the mid-nineteenth century the Protestants who originally settled in Ireland in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and who had for about a century retained claim to English ethnicity and English nationality had long since given up this identification and had embraced Irish nationality to the extent of becoming, to some degree, Irish nationalists. This shift can be seen by the end of the seventeenth century in the argument put forward by some Irish Protestants that they in fact constituted the Irish nation itself and that Ireland was a separate kingdom. This identification with Ireland increased through the eighteenth century when antiquarianism (poking around cultural corpses) became a popular pastime for Protestants who wanted to establish a clear connection with Ireland, building on the work of Archbishop James Ussher and others who effectively argued that St. Patrick had been an Anglican *avant la lettre* and that therefore Protestantism was far more “native” and Irish than Catholicism. Far from “clinging” to English ways in the ethnocentric patterns of Laura’s father, many if not most Irish Protestants embraced an Irish identity, although the community remained haunted by a sense of ethnic

influenced by (or at least vaguely aware of) an Irish line of precursors. See Killeen 2006 for more on this topic.

and religious difference (for the classic study on this topic, see Canny 1987). Many of them had also married into native Irish families—including the Le Fanus,⁴ who had intermarried with the Irish Catholic Sheridans—which practice can be seen as mirrored by Laura’s English-obsessed father’s hooking up with a descendant of the Catholic Styrian aristocracy, the Karnsteins.⁵

The attacks by Carmilla on these isolated and anxious Anglophiles is easily translated into the rising from apparent death of Irish Catholic aristocrats, who had been thrown off their estates during the Elizabethan, Cromwellian, and Williamite dispossessions and who had been waiting in the wings for a chance to wreak revenge on those who had attained control of their estates. Thus, for Robert Tracy, Carmilla is an “undead survivor from the late seventeenth century,” as indicated by the fact that her portrait as Mircalla is dated “1698”: it may be of importance that the Bishops’ Banishment Act of 1697 ordered all Catholic clergy to leave Ireland by May 1, 1698, so this year can be read as the symbolic death knell of Catholic Ireland (1993, vii, xix). The ousted Catholic aristocrats were indeed historically often spoken of in supernatural and folkloric terms, linked to the *sidhe*, the mythical underground race of original inhabitants of Ireland, whose tendency was to cause havoc for ordinary men and women. As Kevin Whelan points out, the “underground [Catholic] gentry” acted as “shadow lords . . . [an] anterior landed order . . . [who] provided an access to alterity, to a potentially different order, a matrix of memory which encoded an attainable future enabled by the available past” (1996, 3). Their ultimate design was reclamation of their estates now possessed by religiously and nationally compromised interlopers, even in cases where they had actually intermarried with these invaders. That the apparently extinct Karnsteins, who live in the

4. It can be argued that the Le Fanus, because of their French Huguenot ethnicity, should not be considered “Anglo-Irish” at all. This is an argument for a different day.

5. Bram Stoker is another “Anglo-Irish” gothic writer whose family had intermarried with a “native” Catholic family (the Blakes). See Valente 2002, 15–17.

folkloric West, a geographical position that in Ireland carries mythic and folkloric associations with fairy land and dispossessed aristocrats (on this point, see also McCormack 1993, 157), have infiltrated the Styrian equivalent of the Big House may be a prelude to complete take-over. It is therefore unsurprising that the story was published in the immediate aftermath of Gladstone's Land Act of 1870, one of many nineteenth-century British government interventions into the landlord-tenant relationship established in the 1690s. The act appeared to attack the notion of private property and seemed to threaten to turn the Irish clock back, shifting the balance of power from (Protestant) landlords to their (Catholic) tenants. Although in reality it did no such thing, and although the Catholic tenants who benefited from the act were part of a rising Catholic middle class rather than the equivalent of seventeenth-century evicted aristocrats, the act had a high symbolic dividend and did engender discomfort for members of the landlord class (Bull 1996, 54–55). It indicated to many of them that the Westminster government would look differently at the land issue in the future, and “it signalled a . . . new (if rather suspect) harmony between English Liberalism and Irish Catholicism” (Lyons 1965, 146), announcing that a new era was dawning in land politics, an era in which the landed Protestants would be evicted instead of their Catholic tenants and the old dispensation of Catholic aristocratic rule would be reinstituted.

The sense of an Ireland “haunted by history,” in Tom Dunne's (1989) memorable phrase, resonates with Le Fanu's story. Carmilla herself is a remnant of the past come back to destroy the present. As Mircalla and Millarca, she has existed at least since the seventeenth century, and her power appears to be anything but diminished. Such a refusal of the past to go away is basic to the gothic genre, which, as Mark Madoff (1979) has pointed out, is obsessed with the power of ancestry and inheritance. In the gothic, the past is never completely finished with and tends to reemerge with a vengeance in the present, causing havoc and disrupting linearity. The returning past rarely brings good tidings. Laura's unease at the discovery that her young visitor Carmilla looks exactly like Mircalla Karnstein in the 1698

portrait is justified when the General later tells her that the Karnsteins were “a bad family” whose annals are “blood-stained”: “It is hard that they should, after death, continue to plague the human race with their atrocious lusts” (p. 80). When Carmilla’s grave is finally opened, they find that, “though a hundred and fifty years had passed since her funeral, [her features] were tinted with the warmth of life. Her eyes were opened; no cadaverous smell exhaled from the coffin” (p. 92). The passing of time has had no appreciable effect on Carmilla’s body or strength; likewise, even though Irish Catholics appeared to have been vanquished many times over the century and a half after the Williamite Wars, by the mid-nineteenth century they appeared none the worse for battle and ready to reassert their deadly power.

The Land Act of 1870 came hard on the heels of the Disestablishment Act of 1869, and as Cardinal Cullen noted, “the poor Protestants are all very irritated. They never did imagine that England would have abandoned their cause” (quoted in Lyons 1965, 146). *Abandoned* is a useful word to describe Laura’s family here, their “solitary” schloss on a “slight eminence in a forest” whose nearest living neighbors dwell “about seven of your English miles to the left” (pp. 4–5). This “very lonely” (p. 5) isolation felt both by Irish Protestants and by Laura and her father mean that they all are now vulnerable to the attacks of the Catholic aggressors; that the villagers surrounding the schloss are Catholic is made explicit in the funeral rites practiced after the deaths of the young village girls (p. 31). (I address later the question of Carmilla’s religious orientation and her disagreement with Laura over religious ritual.)

I would point out that the vocabulary used to describe Carmilla, as well as suggestive of dispossessed Gaelic aristocrats, is resonant of that used to portray victims of the Great Famine (1845–50). At one point, Carmilla admits to being known as “languid . . . incapable of exertion; [she] can scarcely walk as far as a child of three years old; and every now and then the little strength [she has] falters” (p. 41); she spends her nights prowling the countryside looking for sustenance. Margaret Kelleher (1997) has detailed how famine and femininity have been closely connected in the cultural imagination of the West, and Irish

Famine victims were habitually both feminized and described as walking corpses (of course, *Carmilla* literally *is* one) (for numerous examples, see Kelleher 1997, *passim*, and Fegan 2002, 88). Martin Willis (2008) reads the use of the language of disease and infection within the story as a means by which Le Fanu can reference the discursive presentation of Ireland as a diseased body in much nineteenth-century colonial theory. In the story, the increase of vampirism is discussed in terms of an “epidemic” (p. 41), spread in part by what Laura’s father calls the “infect[ion]” of superstition (p. 36). Laura worries that the death of the village girls is a herald of a coming “plague or fever” (p. 32). Likewise, Ireland was considered the site of both literal disease (cholera in 1835 and during the Famine years) and an actual diseased body itself (Willis 2008, *passim*).

Although the interpretation presented here would be relatively uncontroversial in Irish gothic studies, some scholars and critics with an investment in Le Fanu are uneasy with the tendency to historicize literary material in this way. William Hughes warns that much that is written about Le Fanu is “implicated . . . within the academic discipline of Irish Studies . . . [which] imposes a limitation as to what may be said.” For Hughes, “Within the institution of Irish Studies . . . a subtle pressure is all too often brought to bear, its imperative being to reclaim such writers as Le Fanu, Stoker and Wilde as generically or distinctively Irish writers” (2005, 45). Richard Haslam, too, is skeptical about Irish readings of Le Fanu’s work, and in a study of the story “Green Tea” wonders “whether the story is really haunted by Irish history, or whether [the critic] has achieved the effect by the use of rhetorical mirrors”—a query that can also be directed at the interpretation of *Carmilla* suggested here. For Haslam, critics should be altogether more hesitant when reading gothic texts alongside their Irish contexts (1998, 281; see also Haslam 2007a, 2007b).

Hesitancy is clearly important, not least because Le Fanu was an Irish Protestant, an enclave dedicated to perpetual hesitation, vacillating between Ireland and England, unionism and nationalism, rationalism and the occult, and attracted to both sides of the critical binary. It is for this reason that Julian Moynahan (1994) employs

the term *hyphenated* to describe elements within the Irish Protestant community. This hesitancy in part explains why the gothic proved so attractive to Irish Protestants: as Tzvetan Todorov has argued, fantasy, in which the gothic genre belongs, depends on hesitancy between “rational” and “supernatural” explanations of the plot to achieve its effects (1973, 25). Moreover, cultural hesitators are often drawn to modes of being that articulate such ambivalences—such as vampires, caught between the living and the dead—and although it is certainly persuasive to read *Carmilla* herself as a kind of atavistic Catholic survival, it is interesting that Baron Vordenburg twice describes her, like all vampires, as living an “amphibious existence” (pp. 94, 95). In other words, if Laura and her father are culturally hyphenated (Anglo-Styrian), so too is *Carmilla* (living-dead). Irish Protestants were famously called “amphibian” by Samuel Madden, who pointed out in the early eighteenth century that “like amphibious animals [they] are envied as Englishmen in Ireland and maligned as Irish in England” (quoted in Smyth 1993, 787). This sense of ambivalent Irish Protestant identity was particularly evident in the Williamite period—the period to which *Carmilla* belongs. *Carmilla*’s amphibian nature is, perhaps, most important to both Le Fanu, a member of an amphibious class, and Laura, a member of an amphibious family. In contrast, men such as General Spielsdorf and Baron Vordenburg are dedicated to exorcising the categorically ambiguous, the existentially uncertain, and the metaphysically indeterminate (*Carmilla* is at one point described as a “great, palpitating mass” [p. 87]) from this world, but this would, of course, ultimately include eliminating such people as Le Fanu himself and the enclave to which he belongs—which might explain why this story presents *Carmilla* as a sympathetic rather than horrifying character (for a reading of *Carmilla* as sympathetic, see Auerbach 1995, 38–53).

Like Laura and her father, then, *Carmilla* is a kind of cultural hesitator, and her hesitation has not really been addressed enough by critics looking at the story from an Irish studies perspective. *Carmilla*’s cultural ambivalence is evident in the fact that although she has been persistently read as a Catholic like the peasants in the nearby

village, she viciously *denounces* the superstition of the Catholic peasantry, attacks their rituals as “discordant” (p. 31), and appears to Laura’s father as a kind of atheist, criticizing his appeals to Providence (p. 36). Yet as a vampire she *is* a superstitious Catholic remnant herself, a hangover from a previous age that Laura calls an “appalling superstition that prevails in Upper and Lower Styria” (p. 91). She is a superstition-denying vestige of a superstition, a Catholic-bashing Catholic, a fish out of water (and she does see herself as rather akin to a fish when she tells Laura that in her memory she can still see her first ball “as divers see what is going on above them, through a medium, dense, rippling, but transparent” [p. 45]; Victor Sage interestingly reads Carmilla as “a kind of fish” [2004, 192]). If she is culturally Other to Laura’s Anglo-Protestant family, she is not to be so easily associated with the peasant Catholics either. And this liminality links her to a group of Irish Catholics very distinct from the Catholic peasants who suffered so much in the Famine. The Irish Catholic aristocrats had, after all, become middlemen in the eighteenth century, a group Whelan describes as “amphibian, at ease in different cultural streams, facing simultaneously into both local and cosmopolitan life, straddling archaic and modern modes” (1996, 17). The Catholic aristocratic way of life was as under threat in the nineteenth century as that of the Irish Protestants. These Catholic aristocrats were cultural hesitators yet survivors from whom, perhaps, Irish Protestants could learn: Irish Protestants might also translate themselves into a different realm of power—a more occult one—as the Catholic aristocrats had done (which is why an Irish Protestant can legitimately feel both repulsion and attraction toward them). The ambivalent attraction-repulsion Laura feels for Carmilla is certainly explicable in this context and would complement a reading of the story that emphasizes Laura’s worries about the sexual implications of her desire for the caresses of her female guest: “From these foolish embraces . . . I used to wish to extricate myself; but my energies seemed to failed me. Her murmured words . . . soothed my resistance into a trance, from which I only seemed to recover myself when she withdrew her arms” (p. 29). Laura’s desire for Carmilla is transgressive not only because they are of the

same sex and are related by blood (though certainly because of both of these things), but also because *Carmilla* represents an entirely different mode of existence, although one that in its in-betweenness and liminality echoes Laura's own feelings of hyphenation. The ousted Catholic aristocrats, too, although strange and disturbing in their difference, carry elements of attractive similarity for the soon-to-be ousted Irish Protestants, enduring the abandonment of the imperial parent. *Carmilla*'s ambivalence and hesitation, noticed and emphasized by critics skeptical of Irish readings of Le Fanu and the gothic, turn out to be, on closer inspection, as historically and culturally inflected as other elements of this most haunting of Irish tales.

A hesitating people, a genre of hesitation, hesitating characters: Faced with the Irish *Carmilla*, should the critic also hesitate?

Carmilla and the Politics of Indistinguishability

RENÉE FOX

Despite a prolific writing career, an impressive literary reputation during his lifetime, and a style that contemporary critics have come to label a “distinctive Anglo-Irish Gothic mode” (Glover 1996, 29),¹ Sheridan Le Fanu’s fame as a gothic writer has come to rest primarily on a novel he did *not* write: Bram Stoker’s 1897 *Dracula*, whose excised first chapter (now often reprinted as a short story entitled “Dracula’s Guest”) borrows much in the way of plot and sensibility from Le Fanu’s 1871 vampire novella *Carmilla*. And most Le Fanu criticism, like much Stoker criticism, lands squarely on the shoulders of his enigmatic vampire,² resolving itself into one of two standard

1. I take this quote out of context from Glover’s *Vampires, Mummies, and Liberals: Bram Stoker and the Politics of Popular Fiction*: “But perhaps the most commonly cited influence on Stoker’s work is that of Sheridan Le Fanu, whose vampire story ‘Carmilla’ (1872) was an important precursor of *Dracula*. . . . In fact, traces of Le Fanu’s distinctive Anglo-Irish Gothic mode are evident throughout Stoker’s writing especially in some of his shorter fiction such as the 1891 tale ‘The Judge’s House,’ which comes close to pastiche” (1996, 29). Glover gives no further explanation of what he refers to here as Le Fanu’s “distinctive Anglo-Irish Gothic mode.”

2. I allude here to Michael Davis’s essay “Gothic’s Enigmatic Signifier: The Case of J. Sheridan Le Fanu’s ‘Carmilla,’” which argues, via Jean Laplanche, that *Carmilla*

analytical narratives, both of which seem inadvertently to force apart the very intersections of gendered, cultural, and literary politics that make Le Fanu a provocative gothic writer.³ In one of these narratives, Le Fanu's revisions of the marriage plot demonstrate a fear of the Anglo-Irish assimilating into a barbaric Catholic culture, ultimately

is a tale about the failure of translating desire: "a traumatising failure to decode the enigmatic signifiers received from and indeed implanted by the other, namely *Carmilla*" (2004, 224). I make reference to this essay here because its capacity to wholly separate a reading of *Carmilla*'s sexuality from the novella's political circumstances, despite relying on terms as colonially fraught as they are psychoanalytically weighted, is precisely the impulse in Le Fanu criticism that my essay aims to contravene.

3. W. J. McCormack in *Sheridan Le Fanu* (1997), for instance, provides a very good literary biography of Le Fanu as well as thorough biographical readings of many of his works, but he also approaches the texts through Le Fanu's Swedenborgian interests to the exclusion of all else. Victor Sage's *Le Fanu's Gothic: A Rhetoric of Darkness* (2004) in a corrective maneuver backs away from biographical and thematic readings in order to focus on Le Fanu's narrative craft, which Sage sees as a carefully self-aware strategy of layering and retreat that forces readers both to inhabit and to interrogate gothic space even in the fiction that seems hardly gothic. And yet in representing Le Fanu as a writer aware of and interested in craft, Sage's book isolates the awareness of form from the political circumstances out of which it emerged, suggesting methodologically (although not explicitly) that once we understand Le Fanu as an artist rather than as a hack, his political position becomes a reductive lens of analysis. More recently, Margot Backus's section on *Carmilla* in her book *The Gothic Family Romance* (1999) reads the transformation of Laura's childhood horror into erotic lesbian passion as a means of encoding an anxiety about the Anglo-Irish child's confused and imperiled position as a sacrificial victim to the perpetuation of Anglo-Irish political power; yet, again, although the analysis addresses the psychoanalytic intricacies of the plot, in pressing the text into political service, Backus wholly sidesteps the novella's narrative complexity. Seamus Deane, whose book *Strange Country: Modernity and Nationhood in Irish Writing since 1790* (1997) is interested in precisely this interrelation between forms of Irish texts and Ireland's paradigmatic colonial condition, in a similar vein relegates Le Fanu to a single sentence and a footnote in one of two chapters on Irish gothic (see p. 129). This is not to suggest that no good work has been or is being done on Le Fanu, but to demonstrate that, like Stoker criticism ten years ago, Le Fanu criticism is still struggling to find productive ways to bring together the political, narrative, and sensational elements of Le Fanu's work.

losing their identity in this incorporation.⁴ In the other, Le Fanu's "monstrous" characters represent Catholic power of old returning to annihilate the Protestant usurpers who once crushed them, but who are now, as Le Fanu once wrote in the *Dublin University Magazine*, "from first to last unsteady."⁵ Both of these narratives, however, rely on the presupposition that we can identify a textual distinction in Le Fanu's writing between two class factions (Anglo-Irish and Catholic), right up until the moment one of them is absorbed or destroyed—a distinction represented by either supernatural difference, gender difference, or class difference.

Yet in a novella such as *Carmilla*, which makes an intimate relationship between women rather than between a man and a woman its focal point of conflict, easily identifiable distinctions between characters collapse and, along with them, any rigidly binary system on which these narratives of class eradication would depend. By critically entwining the three most prominent and most often critically divorced elements of Le Fanu's work—its intense and unconventional female homosexuality, its manic Anglo-Irish anxiety, and its intricate narrative uncertainty—we can begin to see in *Carmilla* an uncertainty about the conservative Anglo-Irish gothic tradition of which Le Fanu is so often called exemplary.⁶ Female homoeroticism in *Carmilla* stands not as a sign of sexual perversity within a binary system, but as a figuration of Irish class politics that precludes binary oppositions. By tracing the nature of the erotic relationship between Laura and Carmilla as well as the way in which that relationship impacts and transforms Laura's Anglo-Irish narrative voice in the novella, we can see Le Fanu using female homoeroticism to trouble and to reimagine the relationship between the different political factions of nineteenth-century Ireland.

4. See Sage 1988, Howes 1992, and McCormack 1997 in particular.

5. Most famously in Tracy 1998 and 1999.

6. See Sage 1988, 2004; Howes 1992; Mangum 1997; McCormack 1997; and Tracy 1998, 1999.

In his well-known essay “Sheridan Le Fanu and the Unmentionable,” Robert Tracy has argued that “sexual anxiety pervades the whole story [of *Carmilla*], and Le Fanu deliberately heightened this anxiety by introducing a kind of sex he would have considered illicit in order to emphasize the unnatural in his supernatural tale” (1998, 66). Yet although Tracy ascribes political import to this “heightened sexuality,” his analysis of Carmilla as a figure for the dangerously aggressive Irish Catholic gentry of old elides several important questions about the novella’s sexual dynamics: Why do *both* Carmilla and Laura demonstrate homoerotic tendencies? Why choose female homoeroticism rather than male homoeroticism—in the nineteenth century a “gross indecency” punishable by imprisonment⁷—to represent the unnatural interaction in the tale? And why, despite the beheading of Carmilla, does the novella’s retrospective narrative remain so enamored of her? The fact that Carmilla is a female vampire renders her an emblem of dangerous female sexuality; Tracy argues that Carmilla’s choice to exercise her sexuality on another woman adds to this danger because she becomes a threat both in her aggression and in her usurping of the masculine sexual place. In other words, if Carmilla seems to take on both feminine and masculine roles, then (as Tracy suggests) the Irish Catholicism she is meant to represent appears that much more perilous: imbued with all the domestically destabilizing power of the dominant female, all the socially transgressive power of the homosexual, and all the emasculating power of the sexual usurper.

Yet although today we quickly use the term *lesbian* to define the relationship between Carmilla and Laura, studies of relationships between women in nineteenth-century Britain have pointed out that “the lesbian was not a distinct social type during the years 1830 to

7. In using the term *gross indecency*, I refer to the Labouchere Amendment passed in the United Kingdom in 1885, which made “any act of gross indecency” (broadly interpreted as any homosexual act) between men punishable by up to two years’ imprisonment. Oscar Wilde was famously convicted under this law in 1895, and the contemporary play about Wilde’s trial, written in 1997 by Moisés Kaufman, is called *Gross Indecency: The Three Trials of Oscar Wilde*.

1880, although male sodomy was a public and private obsession” (Marcus 2007, 7). Intimate, even passionate friendships between women pepper the most canonical Victorian texts (e.g., *Jane Eyre*, “Goblin Market”), none of which the Victorians viewed as “homosexual” or “lesbian.” And “even at their most physical and exclusive,” one critic has recently demonstrated, “homocrotic relationships between women [in the nineteenth century] were rarely stigmatized as sodomy or extramarital sex—as perverse or unnatural. Rather, one woman’s passionate interest in another was understood as an organic aspect of her femininity, consistent with marriage and maternity” (Marcus 2005, 6). Although the story of Carmilla leads neither to marriage nor to maternity, and General Spielsdorf laments the vampire’s “atrocious lusts” (p. 80) when he warns Laura’s father of the danger in his household, the intimacy—both emotional and physical—of Laura and Carmilla’s friendship would have had a very different resonance in the nineteenth century than a similarly erotic male friendship.

Carmilla’s vampirism makes her dangerous, but her interest in women does not definitively mark her as perverse, unnatural, or different; rather, the homoerotic desire shared by Carmilla and Laura brings their likeness to one another, their mutual recognition in one another, to the novella’s forefront. Both Laura and Carmilla repeatedly point out each other’s beauty: for instance, when Carmilla first recognizes Laura, she tells her that in her dream she had seen “a beautiful young lady, with golden hair and large blue eyes, and lips—your lips—you, as you are here. Your looks won me” (p. 24), and Laura tells us that when she first sees Carmilla in daylight, “[h]er looks lost nothing in daylight—she was certainly the most beautiful creature I had ever seen” (p. 25). When the women first see each other after Carmilla’s carriage crashes, their meeting is one of recognition—they have seen each other before; they have shared a domestic space (albeit in a nightmarish way); they appear to have the same dreams, suffer the same problem of isolation, and feel the same attraction for one another. “I feel only that I have made your acquaintance twelve years ago, and have already a right to your intimacy; . . . I wonder whether you feel as strangely drawn towards me as I do to you,” Carmilla

says to Laura: “‘I have never had a friend—shall I find one now?’ She sighed, and her fine dark eyes gazed passionately on me. Now the truth is, I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger. I did feel, as she said, ‘drawn towards her,’ but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed. She interested and won me; she was so beautiful and so indescribably engaging” (pp. 24–25). Carmilla’s threat is not simply that she is a vampire or that she desires Laura, but rather that Laura mirrors her desire. The two women bear marked similarities to one another, and Carmilla’s presence in the schloss makes that similarity uncomfortably clear—however good and proper, tea-drinkingly English Laura may be and however “atrocious” and blood-sucking Carmilla may be, their mutual attraction, mutual dreams, and mutual appreciation of beauty collapses the distinction between them in a way that dismantles any easy reading of the novella as a binary allegory of feudal Catholicism rising to crush the beleaguered Protestants.

Carmilla may be the primary seductress in the novella, but Le Fanu does not write Laura as a docile victim of Carmilla’s penetrating attacks. “Laura is neither a typically passive gothic heroine nor a typical heterosexual female,” Tammis Elise Thomas has argued, drawing attention to Laura’s “active will to knowledge” throughout the novella (1999, 50). It is Laura after all, when Carmilla first arrives, who begs to enter her bedchamber, who first takes her hand, makes Carmilla blush, and sits down on her bed—Laura, in other words, initiates the first “adult” physical contact between them. Even if Carmilla’s blushes are less than real, in Laura’s mind at least—for the narrative is her own retrospection after she has learned the whole truth of Carmilla—she has caused this reaction in Carmilla and thus understands herself as an active party. She remembers her own curiosity about Carmilla’s past in a similarly aggressive manner: “curiosity is a restless and unscrupulous passion, and no one girl can endure, with patience, that her’s [*sic*] should be baffled by another. What harm could it do anyone to tell me what I so ardently desired to know?” (pp. 27–28). *Restlessness, unscrupulousness, passion, ardent desire*: all these words recast Laura’s curiosity as a replica of the homoerotic and vampiric desire that Carmilla

initiates. When Laura then describes her manner of questioning Carmilla, these questions are transformed into “attacks”: “I watched opportunity, and rather insinuated than urged my inquiries. Once or twice, indeed, I did attack her more directly. But no matter what my tactics, utter failure was invariably the result. Reproaches and caresses were all lost upon her” (p. 28). Laura’s language again sounds remarkably seductive and vampiric—watching, insinuation, attack, caresses—and Carmilla’s response, equally seductive and vampiric, only draws attention to the similarity of their means and desires: “She used to place her pretty arms about my neck, draw me to her, and laying her cheek next to mine, murmur with her lips near my ear, ‘ . . . In the rapture of my enormous humiliation I live in your warm life, and you shall die—die, sweetly die—into mine. I cannot help it; as I draw near to you, you, in your turn, will draw near to others, and learn the rapture of that cruelty, which yet is love”” (p. 29). In saying that she draws near to Laura as Laura will to others, Carmilla emphasizes their likeness to one another, their shared experience, shared desire, shared actions. Instead of portraying an aggressive vamp and a passive victim, a penetrator and a penetrated, Laura’s memory of the relationship forces us to understand that both women are vamps and both are victims, that both attack and both have to ward off attack—Laura self-consciously dissolves the cultural and sexual boundary between herself and her vampire.

That boundary, however, was never firmly in place to begin with. When the restored portrait of the countess of Karnstein, to which Carmilla bears such a striking resemblance, is revealed, we learn that Laura’s mother is also descended from the Karnsteins: Laura and Carmilla are tied together not only through mutual desire and beauty, but also by blood, despite the lengths that Laura’s father goes to in order to retain their family’s “patriotic” English heritage (pp. 6, 20). The anxiety of miscegenation so palpable in most vampire stories—the circulating and mixing of blood and the transformation, through the mixing of blood, of a human into something else—seems strangely mistimed in *Carmilla*. Although the fear of vampiric contagion and transformation is paramount in the novella, miscegenation has already happened,

long before any actual vamping begins—the English girl and the vampire *already* share the same blood. Rather than projecting an anxiety about one race's growing power to absorb and displace another, a warning, so to speak, about the increasingly powerful Catholics preying on the Anglo-Irish, this mixed line of kinship reveals that *Carmilla* is a story about a mixing that has already happened—about an indistinguishability between races or classes.

The novella thus embodies a profound concern with the mutual roles both classes played in the historical crises that plagued Ireland across the nineteenth century. As Luke Gibbons has argued in *Gaelic Gothic*, “[T]he central issue in the analysis of nineteenth-century Ireland [is] precisely the links between [the agents of colonialism and the objects of colonialism], insofar as it was the landlord class in Ireland that was responsible for the coffin ships, and offloading remnants of the pauperized Irish peasantry onto the advanced working classes of the metropolitan center” (2006, 79). That is, although the vampire has been interpreted *either* as a figure for the colonial landlord class *or* as a figure for the monstrous colonized masses—political cartoons at the end of the century represented *both* the native Irish *and* the Protestant landlords as vampires—the figure of the vampire in nineteenth-century Irish culture represents neither the land-stealing former nor the monstrous latter, but rather the production of each class by the other. Carmilla is a vampire because she herself was vamped, and the Famine-reminiscent, empty village of Karnstein indicates to us that the novella is fully aware that the Karnsteins were prey before they were ever predators. The attraction and affinity between Laura and Carmilla functions not to demonize the Catholic Irish, but to express an “atrocious” (to borrow the General’s word) cycle of political vampirism in which Protestants and Catholics make monsters of each other, reproduce each other’s aggression, and ultimately become indistinguishable from one another. Neither is viable without the other, and neither possesses a stable political, ethical, racial, or, by extension in the nineteenth century, even biological identity. The vampire, always both living and dead, both masculine and feminine, both sexual predator and sexual victim, embodies the crisis of class

conjunction and the ever-reproducing danger that the escalating violence on both sides unleashed on the world.

In *Carmilla*, however, this crisis reveals itself as insidiously, if more subtly, in Laura's narrative voice as it does in the physical acts of vamping and seduction that she describes. Laura's story is marked by the repeated disintegration of narrator into narrative subject and an attendant dissolution of epistemological, sexual, and cultural boundaries. The first chapter of *Carmilla*, for instance, relates a dreamlike experience six-year-old Laura had of a woman sliding into her room and piercing her breast with something sharp—a dream of Carmilla. At the chapter's end, she writes, "I forget all my life preceding that event, and for some time after it is all obscure also, but the scenes I have just described stand out vivid as the isolated pictures of the phantasmagoria surrounded by darkness" (p. 9). Laura then immediately begins her tale of Carmilla's visit with, "I am now going to tell you something so strange that it will require all your faith in my veracity to believe my story. It is not only true, nevertheless, but truth of which I have been an eye-witness" (p. 10). The boundary between phantasmagoria and truth blurs in this juxtaposition of Carmilla stories, both for readers and for Laura herself, for whom the distinction between imagination and witness, internal and external, has ceased to be recognizable.

Yet this abrupt transition from childhood phantasmagoria to adult witness, with everything in between "surrounded by darkness," reveals a blending not only of imagination and truth, but also of narrative identity and memory, of story and Carmilla. Imagination is an independent, inwardly focused phenomenon; "eye-witnessing," however, though it suggests the distance of an observer, *demand*s an indelible relationship between witness and event. For Laura, the "eye-witness" tale provides a structure of codependence that supports as well as mimics the intimate entwining of her narrative capacity with her relationship to Carmilla. The events for which Laura really does have actual eyewitness accounts are the very events in which she feels herself the most lost: "I now write," she tells us, ". . . with a confused and horrible recollection of certain occurrences and situations . . .

though with a vivid and very sharp remembrance of the main current of my story. . . . [I]n all our lives there are certain emotional scenes, those in which our passions have been most wildly and terribly roused, that are of all others the most vaguely and dimly remembered” (p. 29). We might expect, then, that she would pass over dimly recollected scenes of seduction, scenes of wild and terrible arousal, and stick to whatever the “main current” of the story is. Yet the more erotically charged a scene, the more vividly Laura presents it—images of Carmilla “breathing so fast that her dress rose and fell with the tumultuous respiration” (p. 30), “her hot lips travel[ling] along [Laura’s] cheek in kisses” (p. 30), and so on—which suggests that these erotic moments *are* the main currents of her story. In Laura’s memory, her sexiest interactions with Carmilla are also the most self-abnegating interactions: “you must not, I hate it; I don’t know you,” she says to Carmilla, and then, “I don’t know myself when you look so and talk so” (p. 30). But, at the same time, these interactions are the ones in which our narrator Laura revels, suggesting that narrative agency and erotic synthesis are more tightly bound in this novella than even she knows how to acknowledge.

It should come as no surprise, then, that Carmilla’s disappearance as the novella rises to its climax coincides with Laura ceding the bulk of the narrative to other “eye-witnesses”: General Spielsdorf, who spends two chapters telling his own story of Carmilla; the report of the Imperial Commission on Carmilla’s beheading, from which Laura “summarize[s] [her] account of this last shocking scene” (p. 92); and the Baron Vordenburg, “to whose curious lore we were indebted for the discovery of the Countess Mircalla’s grave” (p. 93). In the last few pages of the novella, Laura reasserts her own voice only to acknowledge the intimate relationship between writing this case history and recalling (at least the memory of) Carmilla to life: “I write all this you suppose with composure. But far from it; I cannot think of it without agitation. Nothing but your earnest desire so repeatedly expressed, could have induced me to sit down to a task that has unstrung my nerves for months to come, and reinduced a shadow of the unspeakable horror” (p. 93). This reestablishment of her own

narrative automatically fuses the act of writing with the “unspeakable [or, clearly, not so unspeakable] horror” of her relationship with Carmilla. Telling this story reawakens Laura’s torrid connection with the lost vampire—writing metamorphoses into an act of reanimation.

It becomes clear that Laura experiences her narrative as a sexual resurrection, its strategies of mingled passion and withdrawal as a reenactment of its erotic subject. “[T]o this hour,” Laura concludes, “the image of Carmilla returns to memory with ambiguous alternations . . . and often from a reverie I have started, fancying I heard the light step of Carmilla at the drawing-room door” (p. 96). Rather than a conventional reversion to the nostalgia of a past still alive in dreams, the phantasmagoric narrative resurrection of Carmilla is for Laura the only thing that catapults her *out* of dreams (“often from a reverie I have started”)—that restores her to a sense of self. But it is a “self” necessarily derived from its ongoing regeneration of Carmilla, a self brought into being by the bringing into being of another. As a narrator, then, Laura poses perhaps as great a semantic threat to the tale’s Anglo-Irish position as Carmilla poses physically to the families that take her in. Like that youthful beauty concealing an ancient, blood-sucking vixen, Laura’s early established role as a proper English Protestant and dutiful daughter hides a narrative project rooted in erotic identification with the very creature it is supposed to condemn. The novella’s “editor,” in its prologue, locates Laura’s narrative power in her being “clever,” “careful,” and “particular”—masculine, Arnoldian Anglo-Saxon descriptors, associated in the text with the detached language of the law (p. 3)—but for Laura the locus of creative possibility resides in Carmilla’s light step, in her own reckless capacity to reanimate the dead. This erotic animation and embracing of the other within the self is the antithesis to Anglo-Irish “conscientious particularity” (p. 3), to its narratives of categorization, domination, and eradication. To channel Le Fanu through the words of feminist scholar Hélène Cixous: “When [women] wake up from among the dead, from among words, from among laws . . . [s]o all the history, all the stories would be there to retell differently; the future would be incalculable” (Cixous and Clement 1986, 65).

Carmilla ends in a state of profound narrative uncertainty, with its narrator's conclusion resurrecting her beginning and Carmilla somehow not as vanquished as the novella's men seem to think she is. The impossibility of resolution in the tale stages a failure not only of narrative expectation, but also of political order—the end of this story of female union elides the reestablishment both of an authoritative narrative voice and a firmly grounded patriarchal order. And yet, at a moment in history when the Anglo-Irish suddenly suspected that they *were* no longer the voice of authority, Le Fanu's privileging of a deauthorized, hybrid narrator begins to seem more like creative problem solving than like a prophecy of his own demise. If any story of class dissolution requires at least an initial structure of binary oppositions to overthrow, then this story of female homoeroticism averts potential class extinction as well as potential class sovereignty. Perhaps by offering up a narrative form that allows for neither domination nor eradication, Le Fanu creates a space in which the Anglo-Irish might be able to tell their story of history after all.

A “Ghastly Fancy”

The Picturesque and the Gothic in *Carmilla* as a Vampire Aesthetic

LISABETH C. BUCHELT

I

Disputes about beauty might perhaps be involved in less confusion, if a distinction were established, which certainly exists, between such objects as are *beautiful*, and such as are *picturesque*—between those, which please the eye in their *natural state*, and those, which please from some quality, capable of *being illustrated in painting*.

—William Gilpin, *On Picturesque Beauty*, 1794
(Gilpin 1808, 1, emphasis in original)

In a pivotal scene in Sheridan Le Fanu’s 1872 vampire tale *Carmilla*, an ancient portrait that has been in the possession of our narrator’s maternal family has been restored. Our female narrator, Laura, is at once entranced by the portrait—calling it “beautiful,” “startling,” “liv[ing],” “an absolute miracle”—and, perhaps most significantly, declares it to be an “effigy” of the mysterious Carmilla herself. Laura’s use of the word *effigy* is telling, for it is a term associated with either a simulacrum of a real person or, in the discipline of the visual arts, with those portraits of the dead painted or carved upon their tombs. We as readers catch the uncanny accuracy of this term when applied

to preternatural Carmilla; our narrator, however, seems blissfully unaware of how close she has come to describing the true nature of her guest. Her father is less effusive in his assessment of the portrait, calling it simply “a wonderful likeness” before turning away from it to discuss with the artist-restorer the merits of the other works of art—the narrator remarking that he “seemed but little struck by it.” Significantly, Carmilla herself gazes not at the object under examination, the newly restored portrait, but instead at the narrator, provocatively and languidly “leaning back in her seat . . . in contemplation, and she smiled in a kind of rapture” (all on p. 39).

I cite this scene because it embodies several of the notions under examination in this essay. Le Fanu’s novella is most often analyzed productively from within the framework of the genre of a gothic novel. However, by shifting the framework to the conceptions about visual aesthetics made popular first by Edmund Burke in his essay *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful* and later built upon by William Gilpin in his essay *On Picturesque Beauty*, I suggest that Le Fanu—an art historian and scholar in his own right—arguably spends more time employing the visual aesthetics of the sublime, beautiful, and picturesque than he does what might be thought of as more classical markers of the literary gothic, such as the convoluted plot, byzantine familial relationships, and verbal intricacies involving complicated wills or other legal documents. This narrative technique thereby forges a connection between popular ideas about the picturesque and what constitutes the vampiric. In this essay, I show that Le Fanu invokes both Burke’s and Gilpin’s ideas by using the popular literary trope of medievalism in order to forge this connection and so constructs what I term a “vampire aesthetic.”

When Gilpin wrote his essay on picturesque beauty, he built upon aesthetic ideas first put forward by Edmund Burke in his 1757 treatise *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and the Beautiful*. In this essay, Burke defines two categories of visual stimuli: the beautiful and the sublime. He summarizes the main physical aspects of these two aesthetic categories: sublime objects are “vast,”

“rugged and negligent,” “dark and gloomy,” “solid, even massive”; in contrast, beautiful ones are “comparatively small . . . smooth and polished” and should not be “obscure . . . [but] light and delicate.” The intellectual effects of these two “ideas of a very different nature” are that “the one [is] founded on pain, the other on pleasure.” Most important for this exploration of the vampire aesthetic, Burke also emphasizes that the “causes” of the viewer’s intellectual reactions, whether pleasure or pain, must “keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions” ([1757] 1996, part III, sec. XXVI).¹ Burke thus suggests that the beautiful and the sublime are forever divided.

It is, however, important to note that within Burke’s essay it is left somewhat ambiguous as to which category provokes which reaction. That is, Burke’s list of characteristics follows the pattern of sublime first, beautiful second. With the introduction of a third category, the picturesque, Gilpin proposes a way to bridge the two categories and so link what is, for Burke, their opposed aesthetic reactions of pain and pleasure. First, Gilpin suggests that there is an aesthetic experience halfway between the pleasure of beauty and the pain of the sublime, which he terms “the picturesque.” This link between the aesthetic responses of pleasure and pain is almost a cliché in the description of the human reaction to the vampire as it develops in literature: the vampiric becomes a primary locus for the connection between the pleasure of sex, on the one hand, and the pain of death and the

1. Here is Burke’s quotation in full: “For sublime objects are vast in their dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smooth and polished; the great, rugged and negligent; beauty should shun the right line, yet deviate from it insensibly; the great in many cases loves the right line, and when it deviates, it often makes a strong deviation; beauty should not be obscure; the great ought to be dark and gloomy; beauty should be light and delicate; the great ought to be solid, even massive. They are indeed ideas of a very different nature, one being founded on pain, the other on pleasure; and however they may vary afterwards from the direct nature of their causes, yet these causes keep up an eternal distinction between them, a distinction never to be forgotten by any whose business it is to affect the passions.”

unstoppable attraction to the loathsome, on the other. We will see, however, that in *Carmilla* Le Fanu suggests that there is danger in maintaining this aesthetic link.

At the same time, Gilpin sets up an antagonistic relationship between an aesthetic founded on the classical and this third category of the picturesque. He writes that if a "piece of Palladian architecture" is introduced into a picture, "it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please." To render that same picture picturesque, the artist and viewer must "beat down" and "deface" the offending classical element and throw its battered pieces "around in heaps"; using a "mallet" rather than a "chisel," we must turn a "*smooth* building . . . into a rough ruin" (1808, 7, emphasis in original).² But it is not just any irregular, defaced, or rough building that will lend a true picturesque quality to a scene. In the companion essay to *On Picturesque Beauty*, also from 1794, *On Picturesque Travel*, Gilpin specifies the best ruins to provoke a picturesque response are those of the European Middle Ages: "But among all the objects of art, the picturesque eye is perhaps most inquisitive after the elegant relics of ancient architecture; the ruined tower, the gothic arch, the remains of castles, abbeys. These are the richest legacies of art. They are consecrated by time; and almost deserve the veneration we pay to the works of nature itself" (1808, 46). In his aesthetics, then, Gilpin again suggests that it is their very imperfections caused by the destructive force of time that renders them worthy of admiration. This is a textbook example of the type of aesthetic reflex we know as medievalism, and we will see that it is exactly this reflex that Laura imitates in her own reaction to her environment.

2. Gilpin's quotation in full reads: "But if we introduce [a piece of Palladian architecture] in a picture, it immediately becomes a formal object, and ceases to please. Should we wish to give it picturesque beauty, we must use the mallet, instead of the chisel: we must beat down one half of it, deface the other, and throw the mutilated members around in heaps. In short, from a *smooth* building we must turn it into a *rough* ruin. No painter, who had the choice of the two objects, would hesitate a moment."

Medievalism is an attitude that developed as part of a larger antiquarian interest in the many facets of a nation's past—its literature, architecture, and visual arts—throughout the eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries. It was in many ways a reaction against neoclassicism, which valorized the culture of classical Greece and Rome and is sometimes thought of as a subcategory of romanticism. Philosophers, authors, and visual artists working in all media and a variety of genres deployed the multitudinous intellectual constructions of the Middle Ages to reinvigorate medieval literary genres and tropes; to construct racial or national identities through the use (or abuse) of contemporary medieval historiography and literary research endeavors; and to promote the relationship between medievalism, on the one hand, and mysticism, occultism, and esotericism, on the other. The genre of the gothic novel is in fact itself a perfect example of medievalism in literature. The historical novels of Sir Walter Scott are perhaps the most well-known examples of medievalism, as are the many examples of visual artists rendering haunted, misty landscapes populated with ruined abbeys or castles (the work of the German artist and draughtsman Caspar David Friedrich, for example) or oppressive scenes of Shakespearean tragedies, filled with fantastical creatures, or illustrations of Arthurian romances (as in the work of John Henry Fuseli).³

The other important element in Gilpin's response to Burke's work, analogous to Burke's emphasis on the need to keep the causes of a viewer's reaction of pleasure (the beautiful) or pain (the sublime) separate from each other, is Gilpin's suggestion that there needs to be a more careful distinction between those aesthetic experiences that happen "live" and those that happen before a reproduction, such as a painting. For Gilpin, beautiful objects are those that "please the eye in their *natural* state" (1808, 3, emphasis in original). A picturesque

3. For an example of Freidrich's use of medievalism, see his painting *The Abbey in the Oakwood*; for Fuseli's use of this aesthetic, refer to his very famous painting *The Nightmare*, his *Macbeth and the Witches*, or his *Percival Delivering Belisane*.

object, in contrast, cannot be *only* natural, but it must also exhibit some quality that may be captured or enhanced specifically through artifice—whether that artifice is a rendering in paint, charcoal, or other visual reproductive media or simply a recontextualizing of the landscape scene discovered on an outdoor ramble by the viewer’s turning her back to it and then framing it properly within her Claude glass.⁴ In terms of *Carmilla*, we will see that our narrator indeed turns her back on Carmilla’s more alarming qualities—in other words, those that show her to be dangerous and unnatural—effectively and artfully “reframing” her guest to see only those appealing picturesque qualities she wants to see. In doing so, Laura allows the conflation of the beautiful and the sublime that is Carmilla into her life, almost to her own destruction.

The use of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century aesthetic discourses in the genre of the gothic is, of course, not original to Le Fanu. Ann Radcliffe is central and indeed originary to this approach as well as to many other typical gothic tropes.⁵ The difference between other uses of these discourses and their use in *Carmilla*, however, is that Le Fanu plays with the trope of aesthetic discourse much more consciously than do other gothic authors. In other words, in this novella they are central to the construction of the vampire, to our narrator’s reaction to and her own attempted construction of the vampire as nonthreatening, and to the reader’s recognition of Carmilla’s true nature. In other words, the narrator recognizes Carmilla’s uniqueness, indeed her miraculousness, but cannot yet see beyond the image presented

4. A Claude glass was a small convex mirror that hikers carried out into the countryside so that when they happened upon a scene that seemed to have picturesque possibilities, they could promptly turn their backs to it and then frame it in the mirror to render it perfectly so. These glasses were accompanied by different-colored filters so that the viewer could manipulate the reflected images’ lighting to suit his or her taste—that is, place a blue filter on it to view the scene in a dusk light or a yellow filter on it to see what it would look like at dawn.

5. See, for example, Mishra 1994; Kilgour 1995; Clery and Miles 2000, 99–172 (various essays); and Hansen 2009.

on the outside to the monster lurking on the inside. As suggested earlier, although *Carmilla* is not unique in the emphasis placed on visual surroundings, its narrator deploys aesthetic terms within her descriptions in a particularly technical way, which ultimately describes more than just her visual environs. They cue the reader familiar with the aesthetic philosophies that Laura invokes to see how Le Fanu's character of the vampiric Carmilla embodies an impossible union of the Burkeian beautiful and the Gilpinean picturesque: a vampire aesthetic. But as Burke suggests when he insists on the necessity of keeping the beautiful separate from the sublime, this aesthetic union must ultimately be destroyed to give Laura intellectual and emotional peace.

It is clear from our narrator's description of her surrounding landscape that she is well versed in and, indeed, a devotee of Gilpin's ideas about what constitutes a picturesque landscape rather than a beautiful one. Their Styrian schloss is "picturesque [and] solitary," the road leading to it "very old and narrow." The forest nearby "opens in an irregular and very picturesque glade before its gate," and the nearest indication of human habitation is, appropriately enough for a textbook picturesque landscape, an uninhabited "ruined village, with its quaint little church, now roofless, in the aisle of which are the mouldering tombs of the proud family of Karnstein, now extinct" (pp. 4–5). Later, the narrator and her father, during their evening walk just near the forest that borders their schloss, rest on "a rude bench," before continuing on their way to the road where it "crosses the steep and picturesque bridge, near which stands a ruined tower . . . and beyond the bridge an abrupt eminence rises, covered with trees, and showing in the shadows some grey ivy-clustered rocks" (pp. 11–12). Gilpin's "mallet" has been used not only on the buildings near Laura's home, but also on the surrounding natural landscape: the road old and in need of improvement; the forest variously "sylvan," "melancholy," "noble," "lordly," and "irregular" (pp. 11–13, 5); the entire scene ultimately rendering the "enchanted glory and vagueness of the prospect" to picturesque perfection (p. 13).

Visible references to the ruined past also abound and are labeled as such by our narrator. The schloss is a "feudal residence" complete

with a drawbridge, towers, and a “Gothic chapel,” and the picturesque bridge also receives the additional descriptor “Gothic” (pp. 4–5). The invocation of medievalism does not stop with the exterior. The schloss’s drawing room is furnished with “Utrecht velvet” and “[t]he walls are covered with tapestry . . . the figures . . . in ancient and very curious costume, and the subjects represented are hunting, hawking, and generally festive” (p. 20).

This carefully wrought depiction of both a perfect picturesque landscape and the visible reminders of the human past creates the perfect space from which Le Fanu’s unnatural character may rise. The landscape, with its uncultivated roughness, the uninhabited ruins, and the remnants of the “extinct” family—all seen through the eyes of a lonely, delicate feminine gaze—provides the alembic for the almost living revenant from this ruined past, Carmilla, to become an uncanny embodiment of both the now undomesticated landscape and its dead feudal history. It is at this moment, at the moonlit confluence of the picturesque and another key component to the aesthetic of medievalism, the occult, that the vampiric erupts into the narrative as Laura and her father conclude their walk.

It is, of course, no accident that this moment is prophetically set up by one of Laura’s governesses, Mademoiselle De Lafontaine, “assumed to be psychological, metaphysical, and something of a mystic,” not to mention *not* British: “‘The moon, this night,’ she said, ‘is full of odylic and magnetic influence—and see, when you look behind you at the front of the schloss, how all its windows flash and twinkle with that silvery splendour, as if unseen hands had lighted up the rooms to receive fairy guests’” (pp. 13–14). In this edition, Kathleen Costello-Sullivan notes that the word *odylic*—which is often corrected, wrongly I believe, by other editors to “idyllic”—is a technical term coined by a German philosopher-mystic to describe all manner of mysterious and unexplained phenomena, another indication that Le Fanu may have expected at least some of his readers to be alert to his narrator’s purposeful, technical uses of various aesthetic discourses. Most important for our purposes here, by having Mademoiselle De Lafontaine specifically remark that the interior of the schloss seems to

have been prepared by “unseen hands” to “receive fairy guests,” Le Fanu has effectively set up the literary space so that the picturesque exterior can now transfer to the schloss’s interior through the “fairy guest,” Carmilla herself.

II

In examining the *real object*, we shall find, one source of beauty arises from that species of elegance, which we call *smoothness* or *neatness*, for the terms are nearly synonymous.

—William Gilpin, *On Picturesque Beauty*
(Gilpin 1808, 4, emphasis in original)

Once the narrative moves indoors, our narrator’s aesthetic sensibilities also change, despite the obvious interior medievalism that virtually creeps in from the exterior, and she moves from appreciating the picturesque to appreciating the beautiful—for this is what Carmilla comes to embody, at least visibly. What is perhaps more significant, but still escaping our narrator’s conscious notice, is how Carmilla is actually a combination of Gilpin’s picturesque and beautiful; in her external features, she is everything smooth, small, and delicate. Before the narrator describes Carmilla’s external beauty, her initial reaction is horror when she recognizes the face as one she had seen in a nightmare as a child. The initial sight of Carmilla strikes her “dumb in a moment, and made [her] recoil a step or two” (p. 23). After this instinctual reaction, however, she admits, “I felt rather unaccountably towards the beautiful stranger . . . ‘drawn towards her,’ but there was also something of repulsion. In this ambiguous feeling, however, the sense of attraction immensely prevailed . . . she was so beautiful and so indescribably engaging” (p. 25). Unlike her later near-relation Count Dracula, Carmilla shares the external perfections of the aesthetically beautiful: she is “slender, and wonderfully graceful,” her complexion is “rich and brilliant,” her features are “small and beautifully formed,” her eyes “lustrous,” and her hair “thick and long . . . fine and soft . . . with something of gold” (p. 27). The only physical suggestions we are given that she is more, or perhaps less, than

aesthetically beautiful are that she is above average in height, her face often retains a melancholic expression, and, although graceful, her "movements were languid—*very* languid" (p. 27). These are the features Carmilla displays while confined to the interior of the schloss, features that, on the surface at least, allow our narrator to think of her as beautiful and so calm and safely contained.

However, Carmilla never completely loses her connection to the undomesticated, wild exterior, and she possibly can be read as a conduit through which the savageness of the picturesque exterior comes indoors. Our narrator perceives this possibility when she becomes uneasy with Carmilla's more intangible qualities: her secretiveness, her unusual outbursts of oppressive affection toward the narrator, and her famously languid melancholy. Like the moment when her seemingly living carriage bursts into the dead landscape, at once embodying and rupturing the picturesque moment enjoyed by the narrator and her father, these outbursts of Carmilla's picturesque interior through to her beautiful exterior temporarily shatter its calm, smooth, polished illusion and confound and disturb our narrator's apprehension of Carmilla's surface aesthetics.

The most significant disruptions of the narrator's perceptions of Carmilla occur, not coincidentally, outside the schloss on one of their "saunters." In the first instance, the narrator and Carmilla are resting on a bench among some trees when a funeral passes by. The narrator stands and joins in with the peasants' hymn, but Carmilla remains sitting and shakes the narrator "roughly," remarking "brusquely" on how "discordant" the hymn is and "stopping her ears with her tiny fingers" (p. 31). Once the funeral passes and the companions move back farther into the trees, the narrator notes that Carmilla's "face underwent a change that alarmed and even terrified me for a moment. It darkened, and became horribly livid; her teeth and hands were clenched, and she frowned and compressed her lips, while she stared down upon the ground at her feet, and trembled all over with a continued shudder" (p. 32). Once out in the wild, picturesque environs surrounding the castle, Carmilla's own picturesque elements—roughness, darkness, and an artificially preserved naturalness—thus respond

to the combined stimulus of the actual natural environment and the medievalized funeral procession. This procession—with its suggestion of ancient peasant superstition, mystical church ritual standing against unseen evil, and the implications of a return of that quintessentially medieval disease, the Black Death—causes the vampire’s hidden interior to burst through her beautiful exterior and reveal the impossible living incarnation of all that is gothic, ruined, and so picturesque in Carmilla. What makes such a rupture more disturbing for our narrator is that a piece of the beautiful aesthetic remains intact in Carmilla’s “tiny fingers.”

By *not* deploying the technical term “picturesque” in Laura’s description of the peasants’ procession or Carmilla’s shocking change, Le Fanu also underscores that although these moments of rupture disturb our narrator, they are not yet enough to convince her that her perception of her guest may be incomplete and incorrect. In fact, this descriptor does not appear again until the narrative begins its final denouement in chapter X. It is no accident that the figures of the woodsmen and the ancient priest, who help to identify and execute Carmilla, have their appearance heralded by the reintroduction of the descriptors “picturesque” and “Gothic” into the text. But rather than the picturesque and Gothic presenting themselves as passively surrounding the living narrator and her family and friends, the human characters purposely journey to these qualities’ point of origin, to the heart of darkness, as it were, in order to destroy permanently the being who impossibly embodies both the picturesque and the beautiful.⁶

6. It is also no coincidence that the priest and woodman are echoes of the “mountebank” who visits the schloss earlier in the narrative. He is a textbook example of the archetypal Fool—a character invoked, particularly in nineteenth-century occult societies and writings, as one who, accompanied by a mongrel dog and in spite of his churlish, outcast appearance, has the wisdom to see beyond surfaces, especially if those surfaces are disguising a preternatural creature. The archetypal Fool is also often portrayed as having the knowledge of the occult science of alchemy and able to disregard and so transgress all borders—such as class boundaries or political boundaries as well as the boundaries between the human and the nonhuman, the living

Once the family begins its journey to reach the ruined village and castle of Karnstein, Le Fanu again has our narrator wax poetic in her descriptions of the environment. They are going to “picturesque grounds” through a landscape “totally destitute of the comparative formality which artificial planting and early culture and pruning impart,” winding by “broken hollows” over “[irregular] ground” (p. 63). Once at the village, they are presented with, in addition to the ruined village, “the towers and battlements of the dismantled castle, round which gigantic trees are grouped, over[hanging] us from a slight eminence” (p. 80). The attached “shadowy chapel” is described as “Gothic,” and its “narrow, arched doorway” is “surmounted by one of those demoniacal grotesques in which the cynical and ghastly fancy of old Gothic carving delights” (p. 88). As mentioned earlier, this passage is the first use of either “picturesque” or “Gothic” since the opening chapters, and it is again into this visual confluence of the aesthetics of the picturesque and medievalism that the vampiric Carmilla will again be definitively identified as preternaturally Other by those marginal characters who also embody the surrounding aesthetic, but without disguise.

The woodman is a rustic, a “hardy old fellow” who directs them to an even older woodman, a “ranger of the forest . . . sojourning in the house of a priest,” who tells them that the village became deserted because it was “troubled by *revenants*” (p. 82). Even he, however, cannot tell them where the tomb of the originating vampire, the Countess Mircalla, can be found. But perhaps intuiting that the menacing revenant’s time is drawing to a close, he tells them of an even older character who can show them where to find her tomb and then drops his ax in the chapel before going back out into the forest. Armed with this tool of the inhabitant of the picturesque, the General—who by virtue of his

and the dead—in order to speak truth. Le Fanu depicts him not only as being in the liminal space between the schloss and the exterior world—seen both in his appearance on the road and crossing the border of the walls and in the girls’ gazing at him from the permeable border of interior and exterior represented by the window—but also as carrying all the tools of his transgressive trade, which connect him clearly to the ancient, mysterious, medieval past.

experience with the vampiric aesthetic can be read as also a marginal figure embodying the picturesque without disguise—will also be able to identify the prodigy when she makes her entrance.

The narrator, emphasizing Carmilla's physical qualities and so reducing her to nothing more than a collection of surface aesthetics, describes how the "beautiful face and figure of Carmilla enter the shadowy chapel" directly under that which is her aesthetic opposite on the surface—the "demoniacal grotesque"—but which perfectly illustrates her monstrous interior. Like the portrait, which at once reveals and conceals what her real essence is, this visual dichotomy reveals the impossible paradox that is Carmilla. Unlike in the encounter with the portrait, however, in the encounter in the chapel the humans have one among them who—like the funeral procession, the mountebank, and the woodmen—immediately recognizes the paradoxically complete medieval remnant for what it is and moves to attack it with the ax, hoping to sever permanently this unnatural connection between the picturesque and the beautiful and to force Carmilla's interior again to disrupt the aesthetic of her exterior: "a brutalized change came over her features. It was an instantaneous and horrible transformation, as she made a crouching step backwards. . . . [H]e struck at her with all his force, but she dived under his blow, and unscathed, caught him in her tiny grasp by the wrist. He struggled for a moment to release his arm, but his hand opened, the axe [*sic*] fell to the ground, and the girl was gone" (p. 88). As with the other revelatory moments in the narrative, the beautiful still makes its presence known through the paradoxical diminution of Carmilla's external physicality ("tiny grasp"), retained alongside the presentation of preternatural strength and brutal violence. In the earlier scene with the mountebank at Laura's schloss, he never got the chance to encounter Carmilla directly, and so we as readers never know whether the mountebank's quest to defang the vampire and so sever the link between the beautiful and the picturesque would have been successful. If the encounter with another local "rustic" marginal character, the elderly General Spielsdorf, in the chapel is any indication, however, it seems that although these characters are representative of those marginal occult forces that have some

ability to battle other marginal occult forces, they cannot ultimately defeat the vampire. So what is it they lack in order to successfully sever the tie between the beautiful and the picturesque and so destroy its embodiment, the vampire? The last of the marginal rustic characters, Baron Vordenburg, knows exactly where the living revenant from the dead past can be found, and the reader learns what the mountebank and the General lacked: the open display of infirmity and extreme age.

The ancient Baron shares exterior qualities with the two marginal rustics, but it is also suggested that through his extreme age he embodies a more direct opponent to the Mircalla/Carmilla figure by having the same type of immediate connection to the landscape through his status as an ancient local, noble landholder. In other words, the Baron is just as "medieval" as Carmilla, but the ravages of time—Gilpin's mallet, as it were—are visible. As a result, he essentially replaces the dangerous compound of the beautiful and picturesque vampiric in the narrative with a "pure" embodiment of the picturesque. He shares with the mountebank and the two woodmen the quality of slight deformity and their mysterious tools as well as the extreme age (though to a lesser extent) of the vampire:

[O]ne of the strangest looking men I ever beheld, entered the chapel at the door through which Carmilla had made her entrance and her exit. He was tall, narrow-chested, stooping. . . . His face was brown and dried in with deep furrows. . . . He . . . walked slowly, with an odd shambling gait, with his face sometimes turned up to the sky, and sometimes bowed down toward the ground, seemed to wear a perpetual smile; his long thin arms were swinging, and his lank hands . . . waving and gesticulating in utter abstraction. (p. 89)

Sharing the same liminal space as Carmilla—the chapel doorway—and literally replacing her in the tableau within, he also may be read as sharing at least a couple of Carmilla's mysterious inner qualities: her unusual height and, in his "odd, shambling gait," her languidness and inability to walk above a saunter. Like the other marginal human figures, however, he makes no attempt to render his appearance as anything other than old and rough. He also makes no attempt to qualify

the external expression of his internal state, allowing his “lank hands” to gesture in “utter abstraction.” He is odd and somewhat “ruined” in looks *and* behavior; he is only picturesque.

Carmilla’s disappearance from the narrator’s life now permanently disrupts the narrative of the “beautiful stranger” she had been telling herself, allowing her to turn away metaphorically from the artifice of her Claude glass and see the picturesque in its natural state. Once she experiences a repeat scene of her early childhood experience, having guards while she sleeps and a priest blessing her rest, and Carmilla’s “sinister absence” coincides with “the discontinuance of [her] nightly sufferings,” we are told that she “saw all clearly” (p. 91). We learn that Laura found it necessary to effect a complete cure for her aesthetic blindness by taking a tour through Italy—the very heart of the aesthetic of classicism on which eighteenth- and nineteenth-century neoclassicism was based and the aesthetic opposite of the picturesque and medievalism. This tour is meant to wipe away the terror of her encounter with the impossible union of the picturesque with the beautiful embodied by the vampiric aesthetic of Carmilla; but even after the tour’s completion, “the image of Carmilla returns to memory” (p. 96). We are given some comfort, however, that in the narrator’s mind the two aesthetic principles have been safely separated from one another permanently in that the image can only appear with “ambiguous alterations” as one thing or another, either the beautiful devoid of environmental context—“sometimes the playful, languid, beautiful girl”—or the picturesque set firmly within its proper context: “sometimes the writhing fiend I saw in the ruined church” (p. 96). The tour to Italy and the emphasis on how Laura now “sees” Carmilla in her memory at the end of the narrative gesture back to the obvious invocation of the discipline of the visual arts during the earlier encounter with the restored portrait.

The aesthetic reactions or lack of reactions to the portrait-effigy of Carmilla mentioned at the beginning of this essay bring together several related ideas that have been hovering at the edges of this vampire narrative at different moments: the role of William Gilpin’s definitions of the beautiful and the picturesque as a response to the

ambiguities present in Edmund Burke’s beautiful and sublime; the aesthetics of medievalism and the gothic; landscape and the feminine; and the gap between sense and sensibility, intellect and emotion. It is arguably in this moment, the rediscovery of an ancient painted image of a “living” entity, that the reader receives confirmation that Carmilla, although beautiful, is not natural—that not only is she connected intimately with the surrounding picturesque landscape, but she is also the impossible embodiment of its “gothic” past and sustains this unnatural and apparently dangerous union of Gilpin’s aesthetic notions of the beautiful and picturesque through the enthralling and subsuming of female humanity. She is indeed “capable of being illustrated in painting,” with such startling accuracy precisely because she is preternatural. The events before this key moment illustrate Laura’s incomplete comprehension of the aesthetic theories so popular in her culture; the events after it lead to her revisiting and so assimilating them more thoroughly, maintaining the proper separation between pleasure and pain, the beautiful and the picturesque, the present and the past. The vampire aesthetic as depicted in Le Fanu’s novella—and sustained throughout its many depictions since *Carmilla*—is one that defies categorization in its ability to transgress any and all physical, intellectual, philosophical, and historical boundaries. By severing the two images of Carmilla from each other at the end of the narrative rather than showing them united as in the portrait-effigy, Le Fanu essentially rewrites and so severs any ambiguity in the beautiful and the sublime’s connections between pleasure and pain, the now clichéd delineations for the aesthetic space marked as the vampiric, while simultaneously reinforcing Gilpin’s picturesque as a pure, unambiguous, and safe aesthetic category.

On Celluloid Carmillas

NANCY M. WEST

For a book that has long dwelt in the shadows of Britain's literary canon, *Carmilla* has exerted a powerful hold on film. To date, at least seven adaptations have been produced, and countless other movies have engaged the text in some way. No doubt, Le Fanu's voluptuous vampire inspires this attraction. With more than three thousand vampire movies made so far, it's safe to say, along with Ken Gelder, that "cinema is—and has been for some time—the rightful place of occupation for the vampire" (1994, 87). An animating medium that works its magic in a simulation of the night, film has played host to the undead as much as the undead have played host to film.

There are many reasons underlying *Carmilla*'s cinematic appeal. The novella is intensely atmospheric, with a gothic setting rich in details of landscape, architecture, and interior decoration. On the one hand, as a novella, it requires no truncation to conform to the standard script length of 100 to 120 pages. On the other hand, its brevity has allowed scriptwriters to develop plot lines and characters. Many filmmakers have also been lured by its tantalizing depiction of lesbianism, using cinema's corporeality—its incarnation of literary characters into fleshly, enacted ones, its visceral stimulation of the nervous system—to render such desire explicit. Finally, we might even say that *Carmilla* gestures constantly toward its own adaptability, for what else is Le Fanu's work but a series of interpretations, recountings, and narrative gaps waiting to be filled in?

Moving chronologically, this essay surveys a range of films that both adapt and allude to *Carmilla*, making a distinction between those movies that clearly model themselves on Le Fanu's narrative (such as *Terror in the Crypt* [1963]) and those that reference it (such as *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* [2000]). Although the line between adaptation and allusion is notoriously fluid, the essential difference is that an adaptation draws our attention to a single source text, whereas an allusion alerts us to film's inherent intertextuality; as Thomas Leitch phrases it, allusion "shades off into the grammar of film and its collective unconscious" (2008, 123).

Before turning to the movies themselves, we also need to consider how to approach an adaptation. Many viewers expect a movie based on literature, especially nineteenth-century literature, to be "just like the book." Yet the six films that have adapted *Carmilla* differ substantially both from the novella and from each other. Such variation has arguably ensured the continued appeal of *Carmilla*'s raw material—what narrative theorists would term its "*fabula*"—even as the book itself remains somewhat undervalued. Leitch speaks to this possibility when he argues that "texts remain alive only to the extent that they can be rewritten" (2008, 12). Leitch's statement may seem a little presumptuous, but it does well to suggest that we must regard adaptation as an interpretive and creative act, not just an imitative one.

We must also remember that adaptations operate under different modes depending on the ambitions behind them. Following Linda Costanzo Cahir, we can group adaptations into three categories: literal, or those that "reproduce the plot and all its attending details as closely as possible to the letter of the book"; traditional, or those that "maintain the overall traits of the book (its plot, settings, and stylistic conventions) but revamp particular details"; and radical, or those that "reshape the book in extreme and extraordinary ways both as a means of interpreting the literature and of making the film a more fully independent work" (2006, 16–17). Whereas most adaptations fall into the second category, the traditional, those based on *Carmilla* fall largely into the third, radical, a point I return to at the close of this essay.

Like film itself, adaptations are also collaborative efforts enriched and constrained by many factors. Imelda Whelehan points out that potential audiences of even the most widely read classics will be composed primarily of people who haven't read the book. And so any study of an adaptation needs to acknowledge the practical realities involved in producing a commercially successful film—such as cutting anachronistic elements, transforming complex narrative strategies into popular film conventions, and establishing intertextual links with other contemporary movies (1999, 4). The meaning of an adaptation thus depends as much on time period, cultural context, and audience interpretation as it does on the words on a page or the director's camera.

The first film to acknowledge its debt to *Carmilla* is Carl Dreyer's *Vampyr*. Released in 1931, it appeared during the horror genre's first major wave of popularity. In Hollywood, Universal had begun its run of such celebrated classics as *Frankenstein* (1930) and *Dracula* (1931). Meanwhile, Germany's UFA studios were making their own contribution to the genre, producing expressionist masterpieces such as *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligary* (1920), *Nosferatu* (1922), and *M* (1930). The latter set of movies explores the line between subjectivity and external reality, turning supernatural fantasies into plausible circumstances where the unthinkable becomes true, just as in Le Fanu's work. That's why *Vampyr*'s explicit claim in the opening credits that it is "from Sheridan Le Fanu's *In a Glass Darkly*" seems perfectly congruous.

Yet many a viewer has scratched her head over where the correspondence lies, either with *Carmilla* or with the other stories featured in Le Fanu's collection. Alluding to rather than adapting *Carmilla*, *Vampyr* does depict a female vampire (perversely mutated into a crone) who preys on a teenage girl. But these similarities are ancillary, for the real affinity between novella and film—like that between vampire and victim—lies hidden and deep. Indeed, by directly invoking *Carmilla* without transposing elements of plot, characterization, or setting, Dreyer asks us to think about the relation between *Vampyr* and Le Fanu's work in terms other than conventional adaptation.

Thus, this first example of cinematic engagement with *Carmilla* is also the most complex, for what Dreyer seems most drawn to in Le

Fanu's work is precisely what is most difficult to adapt: human psychology and narrative's inability to explain it. Indeed, Dryer crafts his film directly in contrast to a standard assumption about adaptation: that it should occur only when, to borrow the words of Siegfried Kra-cauer, "the content of a novel is firmly rooted in objective reality, not in mental or spiritual experience" (quoted in Hutcheon 2006, 61). Le Fanu's novella is not only intensely psychological, but also marked by narrative gaps, abrupt transitions, and, because of its multiple framing devices, a peculiar sense that the author has vanished into the story. At the same time, it is filled with arrestive imagery that seems to transcend plot and even language itself. *Vampyr* similarly leaves ambiguous whether the events portrayed are actually happening or whether they exist only in the protagonist's mind. And—much to the confusion of its audiences—it abounds in discontinuous shots, irrational crosscutting, and narrative elisions while presenting some of the most unforgettable images ever to come out of German expressionist film.

Although a few other movies gestured toward *Carmilla* before 1960, it wasn't until this year that cinema began an extensive engagement with the novella, probably for several reasons. First, Western culture witnessed a sexual revolution during the 1960s that conditioned movie audiences to expect franker treatments of sexuality. As a consequence, the censorship codes that had firmly checked cinematic content since 1934 were replaced by a new ratings system. And so the horror genre—a genre fascinated by sex, violence, and the naked body—began to flourish once again after having experienced a quiet death after 1934.

The first movie to adapt *Carmilla* during this period was Roger Vadim's highly romanticized *Blood and Roses* (1960). A radical adaptation, this French film rewrites its source text substantially by transposing time and setting to twentieth-century Italy and radically rewriting or even eliminating all of the book's characters. Among the film's most noteworthy aspects is its redirection of narrative sympathy. In arrant contrast to the novella, which renders Carmilla a secretive and symbolic force, *Blood and Roses* privileges her viewpoint. Point of view

is a controversial topic in adaptation studies because many critics argue that in transcoding a first-person narrative such as *Carmilla* into the “third-person reality” of cinema, we lose the original text’s focus on interiority. Yet as *Blood and Roses* exemplifies, a multitrack medium such as film has a distinct advantage over literature, for it can employ much more than language to render subjectivity.

Vadim’s film uses color, setting, movement, pacing, speech rhythm, music—indeed, the entire palette of cinematic creativity—to turn a superficially objective view of vampirism into a richly subjective experience. Inspired by Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, which was released just as *Blood and Roses* went into production, cinematographer Claude Renoir invests each of his shots with a muted beauty well suited to the supernatural; the film moves languidly; and Carmilla, like Madeline in *Vertigo*, possesses understated elegance, a whispery voice, and a gliding walk. The soundtrack is also hauntingly lyrical, reminding us of Lawrence Kramer’s argument that music in films “connects us to the screen by invoking a dimension of depth, of interiority, borrowed from the responses of our own bodies as we listen to the insistent production of rhythms, tone colors, and changes in dynamics” (quoted in Hutcheon 2006, 156). Most striking, *Blood and Roses* relies on a rarely used technique in cinema—voiceover—to give Carmilla narrative control over the story. This narrational realignment helps ensure that viewers identify with the vampire’s consciousness rather than with the victim’s.

The film’s other noteworthy feature is its transference of Carmilla’s passion onto a man. She spends much of the movie pining away for an already-betrothed Leopoldo, who flatly rejects her advances. As a means of assuaging her loneliness, she succumbs one night to an attack by her ancestor, Marcilla Karnstein. Marcilla’s rejuvenated spirit then occupies Carmilla’s body, and together they bite Leopoldo’s fiancée Georgia and inhabit *her* body; by film’s end, as Leopoldo flies off on his honeymoon with a woman he thinks is Georgia, Carmilla has gotten her man. Whether because of the time period (1960 was still a sexually timid year for cinema) or because of Vadim’s auteurial obsession with heterosexual sex (he is, after all, the man who directed

Barbarella), *Blood and Roses* writes Le Fanu's lesbian romance right out of the narrative.

Another key adaptation of the 1960s is Camillo Mastrocinque's *Terror in the Crypt* (1963). Retaining the principal characters of Laura, Count Karnstein, Carmilla, and her mother, this traditional adaptation follows Le Fanu's plot closely, sets its action within the original setting of nineteenth-century Styria, and maintains Le Fanu's focalization on Laura's consciousness. Here, however, our heroine is cast as a medium tormented by visions of vampire murders (without seeing who commits them, she fears that she is the perpetrator). *Terror* also exemplifies cinema's stirring interest in lesbianism. Indeed, it closely imitates the novella's flirtation with the subject while providing the brilliant addition of a thwarted male lover (Friedrich Klaus) for Laura. Despite an auspicious beginning as Laura's dashing young suitor, the hapless Klaus simply can't compete once Carmilla arrives on the scene (Laura rides off with him at the end, but she looks remarkably disappointed about it).

As we watch this highly stylized movie, it's impossible not to see *Terror in the Crypt* as camp. The essence of camp, as Susan Sontag observed more than forty years ago, is its love of artifice and exaggeration—a trait it shares with the gothic. And, indeed, Sontag informs us that the first “true example” of camp is late-eighteenth-century gothic literature. Just so, for the filmmakers of *Terror in the Crypt* run wild with the gothic dimensions of Le Fanu's novella, producing a film that emphasizes texture, sensuous surface, and style at the expense of content. “Camp,” writes Sontag, “sees everything in quotation marks” (2001, 279, 280). *Terror in the Crypt* accordingly doesn't just give us gothic; it gives us “gothic.” It interrupts its storyline repeatedly with photographic stills of the Karnstein castle and ruined village, as if reminding us—lest we forget—of just what kind of movie we're watching. And no doubt, we would be hard-pressed to find a film more populated by candelabras and diaphanous nightgowns than this one.

Yet, despite all its excess, *Terror in the Crypt* asks to be seen as an “artistic” film. Its black-and-white cinematography is elegant; its script contains powerful dialogue; and it bears no trace whatsoever

of irony. We might make an altogether different argument, however, for Roy Ward Baker's *The Vampire Lovers* (1970), an outrageously lurid film that nevertheless, because of its often close adherence to Le Fanu's characters, settings, and plot, might be classified somewhere between a traditional and a radical adaptation of *Carmilla*. Produced by the British Hammer studios, which released a spate of horror films between 1955 and 1976, this version of *Carmilla* makes no pretense at art. As a consequence, it is the first movie to align Le Fanu's novella with popular culture and its stereotyped associations with "bad taste." Popular culture thrives on emotional and bodily participation rather than with the "aesthetic distancing" of middlebrow or high culture, writes sociologist Pierre Bourdieu (1987). And so whereas *Blood and Roses* offers an understated, lyrical inquiry into Carmilla's subjectivity, and *Terror in the Crypt* retells the story of Le Fanu's vampire through its exquisite stylization, *The Vampire Lovers* exploits all the visceral shocks of the book while adding many more of its own.

It indulges in camera sham of all kinds, from using lurid color—which Mike Hammer pioneered—to vaporizing vampires. It also delights in overkill. Every actor overplays his or her role; décolleté abounds; and women's screams often last for upward of half an hour (or so it seems). But its real mark of "bad taste" is its sensationalized treatment of lesbianism. In a clear equation of biting with female orgasm, the film repeatedly depicts Carmilla—wantonly played by the voluptuous Ingrid Pitt—nibbling away on the bare breasts of writhing women. Warned by their associates that they would have to tone down this portrayal or face censorship, Mike Hammer and the director, Roy Ward Baker, maintained their ground by arguing that explicit depictions of lesbianism abound in Le Fanu's novella. *The Vampire Lovers* thus provides a rich example of how filmmakers often claim "fidelity"—a concept that typically connotes conservative values and approaches—in order to ignite their adaptations with salacious or otherwise controversial content and how these adaptations in turn can alter popular perceptions of a book.

Although the relaxation of censorship codes continued to influence cinematic rewritings of *Carmilla* in the 1970s, so did the rise of

feminism and its attendant confusions over sex and marriage. In light of this observation, Vincente Aranda's radical adaptation *The Blood Splattered Bride* (1972) is fascinating. Set in contemporary England, the film retains the principal characters Carmilla and Laura (renamed Susan), while adding a new one in the shape of Susan's husband, Victor Karnstein. Like *Terror in the Crypt*, it also expands Laura's character considerably—this time by casting her as a newlywed bride repulsed by her spouse's amorous advances. Shortly after Carmilla's sudden arrival, Susan begins to fantasize about murdering her husband. One night Carmilla enters their bedroom, and in a series of stunningly gory shots she and Susan try to kill him with a dagger. Replacing sexual desire with cathartic violence, *The Blood Splattered Bride* thus renders Carmilla an avenger rather than a seducer of women.

Several films of the 1970s also revisit *Carmilla* to explore fantasies of feminine revolt or revenge. John D. Hancock's *Let's Scare Jessica to Death* (1971), an allusive revisiting of Le Fanu's text, is one example. Set in contemporary New England, this languid movie reimagines Le Fanu's Laura as Jessica, a young married woman who has just been released from a mental hospital. Along with her husband and family friend, Jessica takes possession of a clammy old house in the country hoping to start fresh. But on their very first night, they encounter Emily, a wayfaring hippie who, at their invitation, decides to remain with them for a short while. She stays and stays (like Carmilla, Emily is a horror of a houseguest), and after both men have been bitten by her, it becomes apparent that Emily is none other than the one-hundred-year-old vampire who in the course of time has attacked all the men in the nearby town. Evoking *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) as well as *Carmilla* in its sympathetic portrayal of a woman whose judgment may be unreliable, *Let's Scare Jessica to Death* asks us to question whether all the events we are witnessing are mental delusions. Is Emily an imaginative projection of Jessica's murderous feelings toward her husband? Of Jessica's frustration with a mental condition that has rendered her sadly dependent on men? The film never makes clear.

Unlike *The Blood Splattered Bride*, the 1978 film *Alucarda*, directed by Juan López Moctezuma, alludes to rather than adapts

Carmilla for its narrative of feminine revenge. Set in an unspecified Mexican village somewhere in the past, it features two young women—the innocent and impressionable Justine (Laura) and the sensuous, lively Alucarda (Carmilla)—who befriend each other while living in a convent. As Alucarda seduces Justine, she gets her to revolt against this oppressive and sexually repressed religious community—a place where nuns self-flagellate and wear clothes stained in their own menstrual blood—by murdering the priest who runs the convent. With its occasional references to Le Fanu’s novella, *Alucarda* can be classified as a self-consciously *transcultural* revisiting of the novel. In writing about this process, Linda Hutcheon notes that the film version typically dilutes the political valence of its source text. Quite the reverse here—for in *Alucarda*, we can see how a seemingly *apolitical* novella can be reactivated for a political purpose, in this case to explore religious dissension in Mexico during the 1960s and 1970s.

Another version of *Carmilla* didn’t appear until 1989, when classic novel adaptation had suddenly achieved unprecedented popularity owing to the commercial success of Merchant-Ivory films such as *A Room with a View* (1985). Produced for *Nightmare Classics*, a TV series that adapted such horror fiction as *Turn of the Screw* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, this traditional adaptation of Le Fanu’s text, also called *Carmilla*, adheres quite closely to its source. No doubt one reason for this fidelity is its television status. As Sarah Cardwell (2007) has demonstrated, televised versions of classic novels tend to be more conservative—both narratively and visually—than their cinematic counterparts. Cardwell traces this conservatism back to television’s earliest days, when it was hampered by technological limitations such as immovable cameras and small studio spaces. As a means of compensating for these constraints, television established a tradition of emphasizing the written word above all other aesthetic aspects of an adaptation. This tradition still lingers, she argues, in adaptations of classic novels (such as those produced by the BBC)—hence, the 1989 *Carmilla*’s retention of much of Le Fanu’s original dialogue, plot points, and characterization. We may also attribute the film’s fidelity to its historical moment; between the mid-1980s and the late 1990s,

adaptations of nineteenth-century literature tended to boast increasingly high production values; “authentic” costuming; “great” actors (George C. Scott stars in this TV film as Laura’s father); and an almost fetishistic attention to landscape, buildings, and interiors (Cardwell 2007, 189).

The film does perform one major operation on its source text, however: it relocates the setting from Styria to post–Civil War Georgia. In doing so, it “indigenizes” *Carmilla* for an American audience—that is, it links vampirism to the most traumatic moment in US history and exploits the American South’s own associations with gothicism. The film unfortunately also posits a troubling correlation between vampirism and the African American servants who populate its narrative; armed with voodoo beads and some kind of inexplicable insight, they all recognize Carmilla’s devilry, while the white folks of the film remain stunningly oblivious. Such an absurd addition to an otherwise impressive film testifies to how the act of adaptation can either “correct” the political errors of a source text (as in recent productions of Shakespeare’s notoriously sexist *Taming of the Shrew*) or wind up offending audiences unnecessarily.

Within the past several years, a surprising number of films have used *Carmilla* as source material for their plotlines and characters. *Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust* (2000), a Japanese anime film directed by Yoshiaki Kawajiri, features an ancient vampire called “Carmilla,” who, interestingly enough, turns out to be the arch villain of the film. In *Carmilla: The Lesbian Vampire* (2004), an adolescent heroine named Jenna and her father must battle Carmilla, a young woman responsible for a vampiric plague that has infected a small American town. Soon enough, Jenna and her father are waging war against zombies, cannibals, and vampires at every turn in scenes deliberately reminiscent of David Lynch’s horror films. *Lesbian Vampire Killers* (2009), a British horror/comedy, revolves around two down-on-their-luck slackers who liberate a rural village from a swarm of female vampires when they manage to resurrect and then kill “Queen Camilla,” the ancient vampire responsible for turning the village’s women into murderous lesbians.

All the films discussed in this essay constitute a cinematic history quite different from that of most other nineteenth-century fiction. True, we can now see freewheeling versions of novels such as *Pride and Prejudice* as we move more and more into an ironic and inter-textual film age. But such radicalism is a recent phenomenon. Since roughly the 1930s, adaptations of classic novels have been driven by two impulses: nostalgia and reverence. Film versions of *Carmilla*, in contrast, seem driven by a will to dissect. This brings to mind Umberto Eco's observation that "[i]n order to transform a work into a cult object one must be able to break, dislocate, and unhinge it so that one can remember only parts of it, irrespective of their original relationship with the whole" (1990, 198). Le Fanu's story has indeed become something of a cult object over the years, and it has achieved this status precisely because filmmakers have been so willing to "break, dislocate, and unhinge it." Whether such readiness has to do with *Carmilla*'s status as "popular" fiction or with Le Fanu's lingering reputation as a "hack" writer or even with the transmogrifying nature of the vampire herself, it's impossible to say. What is clear is that *Carmilla*'s cinematic history provides us with a wonderfully unfettered model for translating page to screen: a model that may well be adaptation's future. And yet even as I write this essay (2011), what promises to be the closest adaptation of Le Fanu's novella to date—Paul Wiffen's *Carmilla*—is currently in production. Boasting the tag line, "At last, J. Sheridan Le Fanu's famous lesbian vampire sees the light of day," the film may well be read as answering our occasional need for fidelity even to those texts that, like *Carmilla*, seem to resist it.

Timeline



Works Cited and Additional Materials



Biographical Notes

Timeline

Date	Ireland	North America	World
1862	Harland & Wolff Shipyards formed in Belfast	H. W. Longfellow, <i>Tales of a Wayside Inn</i>	Ivan Turgenev, <i>Fathers and Sons</i> ; Victor Hugo, <i>Les Misérables</i>
1863	National paper <i>The Irish People</i> founded	Emancipation Proclamation frees slaves in the United States.	Edouard Manet, <i>Déjeuner sur l'herbe</i> scandalizes Paris.
1864	J. Sheridan Le Fanu, <i>Uncle Silas</i> . Irish National Gallery opens in Dublin.	Stephen Foster, "Beautiful Dreamer"	Charles Dickens, <i>Our Mutual Friend</i>
1865	William Butler Yeats born.	End of US Civil War; Abraham Lincoln assassinated	Lewis Carroll, <i>Alice in Wonderland</i>
1866	Alexandra College, Dublin, offers education to young women.	Completion of trans-Atlantic telegraph cable from Newfoundland to Ireland	Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>Crime and Punishment</i>
1867	Violent Fenian uprisings throughout Ireland	Canada, Articles of Confederation	Karl Marx, <i>Das Kapital</i>
1868	Irish Reform Act increases voting franchise.	Louisa May Alcott, <i>Little Women</i>	Willkie Collins, <i>The Moonstone</i>

Date	Ireland	North America	World
1869	Irish Church Act disestablishes Church of Ireland.	US transcontinental railway completed with “Golden Spike” in Utah	Leo Tolstoy, <i>War and Peace</i>
1870	Isaac Butt founds Home Rule movement.		Death of Charles Dickens; <i>The Mystery of Edwin Drood</i>
1871	John Millington Synge born	Great Chicago Fire	Charles Darwin, <i>The Descent of Man</i>
1872	First horse-drawn trams run in Dublin.	Brooklyn Bridge opens.	George Elliot, <i>Middlemarch</i> ; Jules Verne, <i>Around the World in Eighty Days</i>
1873	Eugene O’Curry, <i>On the Manners and Customs of the Ancient Irish</i> , 3 vols.	American football clubs adopt uniform rules.	Germans evacuate France after triumph in the Franco-Prussian War.
1874	Irish Football (Rugby) Association formed in Dublin	First American zoo opens in Philadelphia.	First expressionist exhibit in Paris
1875	Farming tenants’ rights conference in Dublin	Mark Twain, <i>Adventures of Tom Sawyer</i>	Georges Bizet, <i>Carmen</i>
1876	Six Fenian convicts make daring escape in western Australia aboard <i>Catalpa</i> .	General G. A. Custer’s “last stand”	Richard Wagner completes <i>Ring Cycle</i> .
1877	Charles Stewart Parnell becomes president of Home Rule Confederation.	Thomas Edison develops the phonograph.	Sir John Rhys appointed first professor of Celtic languages, Oxford
1878		Henry James, <i>Daisy Miller</i>	Thomas Hardy, <i>Return of the Native</i>
1879	Land Leagues founded	Henry George, <i>Progress and Poverty</i>	Henryk Ibsen, <i>The Doll’s House</i>

Date	Ireland	North America	World
1880	Laborers refuse to work for Captain Charles Boycott of County Mayo.	New York streets first lighted by electricity	Fyodor Dostoevsky, <i>The Brothers Karamazov</i>
1881	Royal University of Ireland Act opens higher education to Catholics.	William H. Bonney, "Billy the Kid," murdered	Flogging abolished in British army and navy
1882	James Joyce born	Oscar Wilde tours America.	Hiram S. Maxim patents recoil-operated machine gun.

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Biographical Notes

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873)

Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu was born into a well-established Anglo-Irish family in Dublin on August 28, 1814: his lineage connects the Huguenot-descended Le Fanu family, the powerful literary Sheridan line, and the ecclesiastical and somewhat radical Dobbins family in an insular web. Le Fanu's father, Thomas, was a Church of Ireland reverend assigned in 1815 to the Hibernian Military School. Thomas's appointment to Abington and other, minor income-generating positions brought the family out of Dublin in 1826 but into the orbit of political tensions in 1820s Ireland. Nearby Limerick—rural, radical, and appallingly poor—highlighted the gap between an (even tolerantly engaged) absentee Anglo-Irish family and poor Irish Catholics at this time. Given that this familial move occurred as the Catholic Emancipation debate exploded and the Tithe War began, the senior Le Fanu's income was consistently in jeopardy, his rectorship plagued by the conjunction of his own aloofness and his parishioners' passive hostility. Le Fanu's childhood impressions were undoubtedly influenced by the political events, isolation, and turmoil that surrounded him in his youth.

Le Fanu was for a time ineffectively tutored by the Reverend John Stinson; he supplemented this inadequacy with reading from his father's library. He began formal studies at Trinity in 1832, although much of his scholarly work continued under his father's tutelage back in Abington. Expressing an interest in politics, Le Fanu joined the Historical Society at Trinity, which exposed him to less conservative views. He became president of the Historical Society and a barrister in 1839.

Le Fanu's writings first appeared in 1838 in the *Dublin University Magazine*, to which he gained access through his Historical Society associations, with stories that eventually would compose the *Purcell Papers*. He continued to provide short stories and contribute occasional articles to this publication, and he eventually made his livelihood largely through journalistic work, including with the *Dublin University Magazine* and as coeditor of the *Dublin Evening Mail*.

Le Fanu experienced financial struggles and personal losses from the 1840s on. His sister, Catherine, died in 1841. He married Susanna Bennett in 1844 and subsequently had four children, but his wife died in 1858, followed by his mother in 1861. Le Fanu's fiction writing had ebbed after 1848; each loss he suffered prompted a resurgence of writing, however. He released three novels in short order after 1863, beginning with *The House by the Church-Yard*, and published extensively between 1861 and 1873. These latter writings include arguably his best-known work, the short story collection *In a Glass Darkly*, which included *Carmilla*, and other generally less acclaimed work, such as *The Wyvern Mystery*. He died at Merrion Square in Dublin after a bout of bronchitis on February 7, 1873.

Sources for this biography and additional information on Le Fanu's life and its influence on his fiction include:

"Joseph Sheridan Le Fanu (1814–1873)." 1991. In *Field Day Anthology of Irish Writing*, 2:883. Derry, Ireland: Field Day.

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Jarlath Killeen is a lecturer in Victorian literature at Trinity College Dublin; the author of *The Faiths of Oscar Wilde* (2005), *Gothic Ireland* (2005), *The Fairy Tales of Oscar Wilde* (2007), and *British Gothic Literature, 1825–1914* (2009); and the editor of *Oscar Wilde: Irish Writers in Their Time* (2011).

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“This welcome edition of Sheridan Le Fanu’s classic gothic tale *Carmilla* frames the original serialized text with an admirable introduction and a series of brilliant essays that both return the vampire tale to its native historical earth and trace its flowering across varied national terrains, expressive genres and cultural traditions. Costello-Sullivan and her colleagues have given Le Fanu’s vampire story a new un-death, in which its intellectual depth, political seriousness, complex eroticism and popular appeal are evident in all of their profound interconnectedness.”

—JOSEPH VALENTE, author of *The Myth of Manliness in Irish National Culture, 1880–1922*

“Costello-Sullivan’s exciting new edition of Le Fanu’s *Carmilla*, the sly 1872 Anglo-Irish vampire tale that laid the groundwork for the arguably less subtle *Dracula*, productively returns to the text’s original serialized publication format. . . . This book is suitable for both undergraduates and advanced scholars of gender, sexuality, and Irish and film studies alike.”

—MARY BURKE, author of *‘Tinkers’: Synge and the Cultural History of the Irish Traveller*

First serialized in the journal *The Dark Blue* and later published in the collection *In a Glass Darkly*, Le Fanu’s 1872 vampire tale chronicles the experiences of a young woman lured by the charms of a female vampire. This edition includes a student-oriented introduction and four interdisciplinary essays that employ a variety of theoretical perspectives. Ranging from politics to gender, Gothicism to feminism, and nineteenth-century aestheticism to contemporary film studies, these critical yet accessible articles model the diverse ways in which scholars can approach a single text. With a glossary, biography, bibliography, and explanatory notes, this edition is ideal for students of Irish and British nineteenth-century literature.

KATHLEEN COSTELLO-SULLIVAN is associate professor of modern Irish literature and the director of the Irish Literature Program in the English Department at Le Moyne College in Syracuse, New York. She is the author of *Mother / Country: Politics of the Personal in the Fiction of Colm Tóibín*.

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